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MOTHER SAINT JOHN FONTBONNE

1759-1843

Mother Saint John Fontbonne

FOUNDRESS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH OF LYONS

This translation is adapted from the original French edition
by a
SISTER OF SAINT JOSEPH
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COLLEGE OF OUR LADY

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PREFACE

In a former work,[1] we have related the birth and development of the Institute of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, founded in the seventeenth century by a Religious of the Society of Jesus, Reverend Father Médaille, or better Médalhe, with the very devoted and active coöperation of Monsignor de Maupas, Bishop of Le Puy in Velay. When the storm of the French Revolution had ended its ravages, the Institute of Saint Joseph seemed annihilated. But resurrections are not costly to God; the work of the son of Saint Ignatius was too dear to His Heart to allow it to perish. In order to restore what men had destroyed, He called to Saint-Etienne, then to Lyons, a soul quite His own and expressed His will to her through His representative.

It is Mother Saint John Fontbonne whom we thus introduce to the reader. We must say that the request to retrace this life caused us dismay, at first, on account of the difficulty of obtaining historical and biographical documents. In 1885, Canon Rivaux, director of the Great Seminary of Grenoble, published the first biography (now out of print) of the venerable foundress. To obtain these documents, he went to the birthplace of the courageous Religious and remained there several weeks. He had then the immense advantage of meeting some of her contemporaries and gathering from them important information, but as far as documents were concerned, he was not so fortunate. In vain, he searched the archives; the registers of the era of the Revolution had disappeared.

Later, in 1908, when the Motherhouse of Lyons was preparing to celebrate the centenary of the restoration of the Institute, other equally fruitless attempts were made. It was, then, simply through obedience and without hope of success that we began the task again in 1927. This time, however, it

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[1] *La Congrégation de Saint Joseph de Lyon,* Paris, Letouzey, 87Bd Raspail.

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was not quite useless, for God placed in our way valuable assistance.

It is with all our heart we bless Him for it; it is with all our heart we thank those who have made us the beneficiaries of riches, amassed at the price of long and valuable researches. May we be permitted to mention Abbé Mercier, titular canon of Notre Dame du Puy, who has given us much light on the incomplete manuscripts which we have in our possession and who acquainted us with Abbé Vacher, titular canon and secretary of the Bishop of Le Puy, and with M. Hilaire Theillère of Bas-en-Basset, Haute-Loire. We owe to Canon Vacher a number of documents concerning Monistrol, the intruder Ollier, Bishop de Gallard and others. We are indebted to M. Hilaire Theillère for all the documents which refer to the parish of Bas and to Mother Saint John's life, particularly her baptismal certificate and the document of her release from prison, which had been sought in vain up to that time.

Let us mention, also, Abbé Mourier of Monistrol-sur-Loire who willingly confided to us a manuscript of Abbé Fraisse, second parish priest of Monistrol after the Concordat,—a manuscript from which we have taken all concerning the schools and hospital of that city.

We are indebted to Canon Bouchage, *Chroniques des Soeurs de Saint Joseph de Chambéry,* for the history of the Congregation in Savoy, and to Abbé Lebeurier, *Vie de la Révérende Mère Saint Joseph Chanay,* for the chapter relating to the foundations in Bourg, Belley, Gap and Bordeaux.

We have had access to the *Archives Départmentales de la Haute-Loire* and to the *Greffe du tribunal de Privas* to obtain information concerning the era of the Revolution. Father Chaussinand of Saint Julien Vocance lent us the documents of Father Dorel, which tell the events that disturbed the parish in 1794.

May all those to whom we are indebted for these documents and manuscripts receive here the public expression of our gratitude. We hope that these pages will be read with interest and that they will make her esteemed, whose memory we preserve.

FOREWORD

In the year 1887 there was published at New York the translation of Canon Rivaux's Biography of Mother Saint John Fontbonne. Nearly half a century has passed before another biographical sketch and translation have been provided for English speaking Catholics.

The present author of the new edition with the passing of years has been able to documentate more accurately her work and present very effectively her data regarding her subject in view of her greater facilities for scientific study and research. The present English translation and adaptation, therefore, should prove both attractive and interesting to readers who are members of the Religious Sisterhood of Saint Joseph and their countless friends and admirers throughout the English speaking world.

It is indeed a rather exacting task to render in clear, choice, accurate English expression any work in a foreign language, since one may become so absorbed in the foreign language and more particularly in foreign ideology as to translate at least certain idiomatic expressions with awkward literality or in very commonplace diction. Our translator has completed a task which must have required more than ordinary patience and skill. With rare practical judgment, moreover, and with the discerning insight of a true Religious she has faithfully kept in mind the scope and purpose of the work, namely, to present for the edification and inspiration of readers not only strictly biographical data but also the moral and spiritual excellence of a worthy servant of God.

Judged in relation to its historical setting, the theme of this book has a special significance and a particular interest. Mother Saint John's life, beginning during the reign of Louis XV, spanned a momentous period of modern history. During the very year of her birth, France lost Canada to a foreign power and her apathetic King shocked Europe by his shameless debauchery. About the time she received the religious habit of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the war between England and France for colonial supremacy raged in nearly every corner of the globe. During this period of extensive social upheaval and violent disorder, when blind, furious, uncontrolled human passions stirred up hatred and strife in the hearts, homes and lives of men, Mother Saint John was chiefly concerned about loving God and manifesting this love in training God's little ones so that they might know and serve Him and Jesus Christ Whom He had sent into the world.

Then, again, as she saw the darkening war clouds gather and heard the ominous rumbling of the initial conflict, she must have realized that when social peace, order and tranquillity would be ruthlessly destroyed, then indeed the Church also would suffer in such a great catastrophe. It is proper to think that she honestly believed that war is one of the greatest of worldly evils and that every possible and reasonable effort should be made to eliminate armed conflict from the affairs of men.

In this matter, however, with the practical sense of a Lyonnaise peasant, Mother Saint John knew that in order to realize this most blessed and desirable objective, people generally must understand and appreciate the value and blessing of peace. In developing and promoting this popular understanding, she acknowledges the social mission of the Church to be achieved through an intelligent, well-educated Catholic laity who could be prepared and equipped at least in promise through the moral and religious education of the youth of each generation.

The holy ambition of the young Religious, however, in this regard was not to be easily or quickly realized. When she was only thirty years of age the storm broke. The Bourbons were dragged from their thrones and all France was ablaze with revolution. Soon the new rulers secularized all church property and demanded from the Clergy and Religious an oath of fidelity to the Schismatic Constitutional Church. Driven from her convent, Mother Saint John steadfastly refused to betray her faith. Stripped of her habit and deprived of a home, the holy Sister of Saint Joseph was compelled to go into hiding. The Revolutionaries, however, were not satisfied with thus afflicting the Religious but even insisted upon their loyalty or their blood. So we find Mother Saint John torn from her retreat and cast into prison and condemned to the guillotine. In spite of all these outrages and the severe experiences of confinement in a dungeon for nearly two years, she patiently and resignedly submitted to the will of God. She was the support of all her companions in misery; stimulating their confidence in Divine Providence; animating their faith and courage and helping them to prepare their souls for the constantly expected summons to die.

The sad instances narrated in this book in conjunction with the period of the Terror carry us back to the catacombs. The heroism of priests and Sisters, the pastoral loyalty of bishops who lived hidden in the depths of the forest or in caves and the unswerving loyalty and devotion of the laity in shielding the Clergy and Religious are indeed soul-stirring incidents which must arouse our undying admiration for these modern martyrs of France who are indeed worthy descendants of Dennis and Irenaeus.

The Revolution continued to run its most tragic course. In every large town the gutters were filled with clotted blood as the heads fell under the guillotine. The blood lust had taken hold of Robespierre. Mother Saint John was finally notified that her day had come. Calmly she prepared herself for martyrdom. God, however, had decreed otherwise. He had work for her to do. She was not yet to die. The wholly unexpected, therefore, happened when, on the tenth Thermidor, the day before the one on which Mother Saint John's head was to fall, Robespierre's own head fell in Paris. Subsequently a series of notable and radical changes occurred. Doors of the prisons flew open and prisoners were released again to enjoy God's pure air. Mother Saint John, however, like thousands of other Religious, stepped out into a world in which she had no home. Their convents, schools, chapels and hospitals had been confiscated or destroyed. Although the Terror was officially terminated, the Religious met the hostility of the irreligious on all sides. Quietly and prudently, therefore, Mother Saint John withdrew to the home of her relatives to carry on her apostolate discreetly. She instructed the children for First Communion and taught religion to the adult laity who had gradually tired of the hopelessness, emptiness and cruelty of organized atheism.

Just as suddenly as July 14th had hurled France into the throes of revolution so also now the Directory fell and the star of the Corsican Bonaparte arose. First it was the Consulate and then the Empire. Little did Mother Saint John realize what the Empire would mean to her. It was not long afterwards that Cardinal Fesch ascended the archiepiscopal throne of Lyons as Primate of the Gauls. Ruin and desolation greeted the new Archbishop on all sides. He was not daunted, however, by the sad spectacle and started at once a tremendous task of religious revival and church restoration. The Cardinal had never seen Mother Saint John but he had heard of her and of her remarkable administrative ability as well as of her zealous religious spirit. His Eminence, therefore, summoned her from her obscure village to come to Lyons in order that she might gather and reorganize the scattered remnants of the Sisters of Saint Joseph as a potent and effective agency in reviving the faith and stimulating piety and charity among the Lyonnais.

Encountering the tremendous and widespread disturbances of the period, the poverty of the Church, opposition of so many irreligious elements, another woman might have reasonably recoiled from the task. Mother Saint John, however, revealed impressively her personal courage, moral fiber, supreme faith and implicit trust in Divine Providence. She threw herself wholeheartedly into the work. Beginning in obscurity and misery in the village of Saint-Etienne, she labored with a most zealous spirit to coöperate with the Archbishop. From all quarters, parish priests were clamoring for Sisters in their schools. The Sisters of Saint Joseph endeavored then as now to satisfy as well as possible these demands. They visited, moreover, the jails, bringing consolation to the prisoners and especially aided in rehabilitating the women convicts. Orphanages were opened; institutes for the deaf mutes were again founded; trade schools were set up; homes for the aged and incapacitated priests were started; hospitals were established. Mother Saint John's apostolic zeal embraced every need of the Church and encompassed every type of human misery.

At the same time, she was reorganizing separate and independent houses of her community in one centrally administered and efficiently functioning religious family. Previously each house had been *sui juris* and thus selected its own Superiors and conducted its own novitiate. The work of the Missions came next. The habit of the Sisters of Saint Joseph appeared in the bazaars of India, in the tropical forests of Brazil and in the streets of Denmark.

Then came the call of the New World. Bishop Rosati of Saint Louis had appealed to the Archbishop of Lyons for French priests and funds for his forlorn diocese on the banks of the Mississippi. He had not asked for Sisters for he had no way to support them. A French noblewoman, however, saw at once the advantages of a group of Sisters working in coöperation with priests of the New World and she paid all the expenses of the voyage, which at that time was long and arduous.

In 1836, just one hundred years ago, the first group of Sisters of Saint Joseph arrived in Saint Louis to settle at Carondelet. Animated by the courage and zeal of Mother Saint John, who sent her own two nieces to establish the distant foundation, the Sisters bravely faced the hardships of the wilderness in their new field of work. The Archbishop of Philadelphia, a brother of Bishop Kenrick of Saint Louis, noting the marvelous work accomplished by the Sisters in Saint Louis, brought them into his diocese. Eighty years ago September first, the Sisters of Mother Saint John came to Brooklyn at the invitation of Bishop Loughlin. September eighth will mark the eightieth anniversary of the inauguration of the first school founded by these Sisters in the Brooklyn diocese at old Saint Mary's in Williamsburgh. From Brooklyn, foundations were made in Boston, Springfield, Pittsburgh and Burlington dioceses.

Mother Saint John continued her zealous labors in educational and charitable fields and saw the foundations of numerous diocesan communities throughout the world, representing worthy offsprings of her own well-organized congregation in France. Notwithstanding, however, this notable and blessed success in her religious aspirations and activities, like every true Christian in her trials and tribulations, she experienced the self-denial and sacrificial spirit of the Cross which she carried faithfully throughout her vocational career and bore patiently and serenely to the end.

Her life was a marvelous expression of heroic sanctity. She manifested the heroism of obedience in the Divine Call; the heroism of resignation to Divine Providence in all her perplexities and sufferings; the heroism of silence and meekness in opposition; her heroism of supreme love of God and her neighbor in all places, at all times and in every undertaking. It is, therefore, most fitting that we should recall the superb sanctity of soul, the purity of intention, the spirit of service and sacrifice and the religious and charitable accomplishments of this great servant of God at the moment we are observing the one hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in the United States.

To aid us in this recollection it is most timely that this newly edited biography and translation are provided. It is also very appropriate that a Sister of Saint Joseph of our diocese on the eightieth anniversary of the Brooklyn foundation of this Sisterhood should call to the attention of American priests and people generally, and more particularly those in our midst, the glorious life and labors of a "mulier fortis" who feared not difficulty, disappointment, pain, persecution, nor even martyrdom itself, because she lived and labored supremely and solely for God and with God and through God for His glory, the exaltation of His Church and the salvation of human souls.

✠THOMAS EDMUND MOLLOY,
Bishop of Brooklyn

August 15, 1936.

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BOOK I

The Dawn of a Beautiful Life

CHAPTER I

BIRTH OF JEANNE FONTBONNE

"In the year 1759, on the thirty-first of March, was baptized Jeanne Fontbonne, lawful daughter of Michel Fontbonne (shoemaker) and Benoîte Theillière of the Borough of Bas, born the aforesaid day. Gabriel Dupont (godfather); Jeanne Dupin (godmother), all of Bas.

"PAGE, *Parish Priest.*"

"Certified in conformity with the register and given by me, Joseph Ducrouzet, undersigned parish priest of Bas-en-Basset.

"Bas-en-Basset, March 16, 1927.

"J. DUCROUZET."

Transcript from the Register of Births of the Commune of Bas-en-Basset for the year 1759

"In the year 1759 and on March 31 was born Jeanne Fontbonne, daughter of Michel Fontbonne and Benoîte Theillière, residents of Bas-en-Basset, Haute-Loire. She was baptized the aforesaid day by Father Page, parish priest; Gabriel Dupont, godfather; Jeanne Dupin, godmother; as follows from the records written in the register of births placed in the archives of the civil authority of this commune, the said record numbered and signed by Jean Baptiste Callemard, lawyer to the Parliament and Bailiwick of Chauffour, in execution of the declaration of the King, April 9, 1736.

"This transcript given on paper, free, by us, Mayor of the Borough of Bas, guardian of the registers of births, marriages and burials of the parish of Bas.

"Bas-en-Basset, March 16, 1927,
The Mayor
A. DE VISSAGUET."

THE documents, quoted above, must appear at the beginning of this book because of the joy which their possession gives us. We know, thanks to them, that on March 31 and not on March 3, as Canon Rivaux believed, a little girl was born in the Fontbonne family and that she was baptized the same day. Her birth, her name, her baptism—

that is her entire history. It is a great deal for one day of life, but it is quickly told.

While Jeanne is growing, let us introduce her family. Little Jeanne's ancestors were modest. Her great-grandfather, Mathieu Fontbonne, was, like Saint Joseph, a master carpenter. One of his sons, Claude Fontbonne, left Vivarais, his birthplace, and came to practise the trade of shoemaker in Bas-en-Basset, county seat of a canton of the Department of Haute-Loire, situated about sixteen miles from Yssingeaux and thirty-four miles from Le Puy.

It was in this little city, pleasantly situated on the shores of the Loire, opposite the imposing ruins of Castle Rochebaron, that Claude Fontbonne settled. It was there on December 25, 1725, that he married Jeanne Dupin, daughter of Michel Dupin and Genevieve Chausse. Eleven children were born of this marriage. The eldest and the youngest were boys and both had the Christian name, Michel.

The elder was little Jeanne's father. He was born on September 28, 1726, and he, too, was baptized on the same day. On January 13, 1756, he married Benoîte Theillière, then twenty-five years old. Tradition tells us that he was a sincere Christian. We firmly believe it; and we also know that, like his father, he enjoyed the esteem of the parish priest of Bas. This is proved by the fact that both were members of the board of trustees. Mother Saint John's father was several times in this council, which was formed only of the notables of the city; and, as a mark of confidence, he was entrusted with one of the keys of the money box.

We do not introduce Jeanne's mother by means of documents because we have none. We shall ask her to make herself known by showing us her children. We know of eight whose names appear in the family genealogical table. Of these eight, three were born only to be adopted by the Church as children of God and to claim the right of entrance into Heaven. Hardly had their feet touched earth, when they spread their wings and flew away. The five who remained were Marie, Jeanne, Catherine, Claude, Jeanne-Marie.

Marie and Jeanne, who became Religious, were the two oldest daughters, not the youngest, as is stated by Canon Rivaux. We shall have to point out other errors, quite excusable, considering his means of information. Tradition has transmitted facts, but it has confused dates, Christian names and chronological order. The documents permit us now to state these facts accurately.

Under the vigilant care of her pious mother, Jeanne, from the awakening of reason, learned to know God and to join her little hands when lisping a prayer. Her virtuous father lovingly contemplated the opening of this soul, fallen from Heaven into their home. These good parents did not suspect the fortune that was in store for their little Jeanne. They would have known more about it, if the One Who arranges our future had opened His book to let them catch a glimpse of what His Divine Hand had traced concerning this frail creature. But He keeps His book closed and tells us nothing in advance. What this book contains must be revealed by events in time, and the parents were as ignorant of these as we are at this point. They knew only what they saw, and they saw many things. In proportion as Jeanne grew, surprising gifts of nature and of grace appeared in her. Her happy parents carefully applied themselves to adorn her heart and her intelligence. She had her first catechism lessons at the paternal fireside. There, too, she learned "to love religion, to respect holy things and God's ministers." Growing thus under the fostering care of her parents, Jeanne, with admirable docility, listened willingly to their instructions. Her soul responded to the inspirations of grace and Faith entered her heart.

Gifted with precocity beyond her years, "she continually uttered witticisms, remarks, questions or answers containing germs of the beautiful qualities which were to be developed in later life. She possessed a rare good sense, refined judgment, a deep and lively faith, a lofty, generous soul, a heart of gold," and, withal, an exquisite simplicity. "The noble Christian, the valiant woman, the holy Religious, were already revealed in the child. Her life was even now in blossom." [1]

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[1] M. Rivaux.

"The childhood of every life is like the flower giving promise of the fruit. Without doubt, not every flower ripens into fruit; but, certainly, if there are no flowers, there will be no fruit, and the richest years are always those which have a promising spring." [2] The springtime of Jeanne's youth was so beautiful that her relatives, friends and neighbors, surprised and delighted at the characteristics they noticed in her, could easily have applied to her the words of the Gospel: "What an one, think ye, shall this child be?" [3] Whether at home or abroad or in the midst of her schoolmates, Jeanne exercised great influence. Over her sister, Marie, she had, in a special manner, a gentle, familiar authority usually accorded only to older sisters. Marie, on the other hand, could not leave her younger sister. One might have said they were twin blossoms on one stem, uniting in their perfume. In their little recreations, more often organized by Jeanne, one could see two bodies animated by the same soul, so much was the elder identified with the younger. It was to be always thus. Death alone would separate those two so closely united in sisterly affection.

[2] Mgr. Dupanloup: *De l'Education.*

[3] Saint Luke: I v. 66.

CHAPTER II

THE CONVENT OF BAS-EN-BASSET

THE Institute of Saint Joseph, which was authorized by the Bishop of Le Puy, Monsignor de Maupas,[1] on March 10, 1651, developed silently. Everywhere in Velay and in Forez, priests and bishops desired these Sisters whose lives were consecrated to caring for the sick, and helping the poor; and who, after the example of Saint Paul, were to return home from their laborious duties abroad, only to find means of meager self-support in untiring labor. Prayer gave to their life a supernatural spirit which brought them close to God; and the grace obtained by prayer made their work fruitful.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph had been at Bas since the end of the seventeenth century. Under the direction of Father Guillaume Pontvianne, two pious women instructed the children. They were sisters who had the same Christian name; the one was the godmother of the other. They were the two Catherines Théoleyre. Guided by the advice of Father Pontvianne, they resolved to establish in their parish a convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and to be the first Religious there. A third person, Antoinette Maurin, having joined them, all three begged and obtained permission to be admitted into the congregation and to devote themselves to the instruction of children and other works of the Institute in Bas.

In 1869, "they bought from Etienne Maisonneuve, apothecary and surgeon, buildings and a garden intended to serve the congregation. The house having been arranged with the active coöperation of the local authorities, the Sisters were able to use it the following year." [2]

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[1] "La Congrégation des Soeurs de Saint Joseph de Lyon." *Collection des "Ordres Religieux."*

[2] *Etudes historiques sur le canton de Bas-en-Basset,* par M. l'Abbé Theillière.

To insure and perpetuate their work, on October 25, 1694, the three foundresses made their will, mutually giving all their property to one another; which property was to go at the death of the last to the community of Bas, as part of the Congregation of Saint Joseph. Fearing, however, lest the work be compromised for lack of vocations, they stipulated in the will that in case there was not a sufficient number of Sisters to form a community, they would supplicate Sisters of the same Congregation of Saint Joseph, who were in the Borough of Boisset, to add to the aforesaid Community of Bas the number that they judged proper, without the Sisters of Boisset making this property their own. The three foundresses gave their property to Bas and not to any other foundation.

This clause proves that a community of Saint Joseph already existed in Boisset. It was established in 1660 and was dependent on the Lord of Vorey. The Lord of Vorey was the Abbess of the Benedictines of this borough. The abbey had to bear the expenses of the foundation in the interest of the children there, thus meriting for Boisset the honor of being the first parish of the canton to have a convent of the Institute.

There was no reason for the community of Bas to be uneasy. Boisset was not obliged to people their house, for God inspired good and true vocations. One of the first subjects who asked to enter the novitiate was Marguerite Théoleyre, the niece of the two foundresses. She became the second Superior of the convent and was succeeded by Catherine Faure.

Under the latter on July 19, 1757, we see an imposing assembly gathered in the convent. There were present, with the Religious, the notary, the parish priest, the associate priests, notables of the borough, the mother, the brother and the aunt of the postulant, Marguerite Fontbonne, who had just spent three months with the Sisters for reciprocal examination; on Marguerite's part, to see if the Rule, life and customs of the congregation were suited to her; and, on the congregation's part, to see if Marguerite gave signs of the characteristics necessary for the austere and sublime mission required from its members. If mutually satisfactory, the contract was to be signed in the presence of the above imposing assembly.

Why was the brother, and not the young girl's father, present with her mother? It was because Claude Fontbonne was dead. God took him to Himself on September 24, 1744, in full manhood, at the age of forty-five; and Michel Fontbonne, inheritor of the property, as the oldest son had become the head of the family. It was also because Claude Fontbonne's widow, three years after his death, married Gabriel Dupont by whom she had another daughter, Catherine.

From the documents, we shall quote part of the deed that had just been drawn up by the notary:

"In the presence of the royal notary and the witnesses hereafter named, Marguerite Fontbonne, lawful daughter of Claude Fontbonne (deceased) and Jeanne Dupin (living), inhabitant of the Borough of Bas, prompted by devotion, desires to spend the rest of her life in the convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of this borough. After making the three months of trial required by His Lordship, the Bishop of Le Puy, and, in the presence of Catherine Faure, Sister of Saint Joseph and Superior of the convent, and of her mother, and with the consent and advice of Michel Fontbonne her older brother, she humbly requests the Superior to receive her as a Sister into the community with the offering that she makes of rendering herself obedient, and observing point by point, the rules and statutes of the community. These supplications having been agreeable to the Superior, after conferring with the other Sisters of the Community, and with the advice and consent of whom, in consideration of the zeal and devotion which the Superior recognized in Marguerite Fontbonne, she promised to receive her and to associate her with the other Sisters, to let her receive the habit and to make her profession when she shall have finished her novitiate, always with the good pleasure of His Lordship, the Bishop. In order that the convent be not burdened by the reception of Marguerite Fontbonne, Jeanne Dupin, mother, and Michel Fontbonne, brother, personally take charge of her dowry. The latter, heir of Claude Fontbonne, with pleasure, gave these gifts by irrevocable donation to Marguerite Fontbonne, the sum of four hundred fifty pounds and the warrant of twelve ells of household linen, table service, a pair of curtains made of woolen cloth, two ânées of wine according to the measures of Bas, two dresses, a wardrobe and so forth.

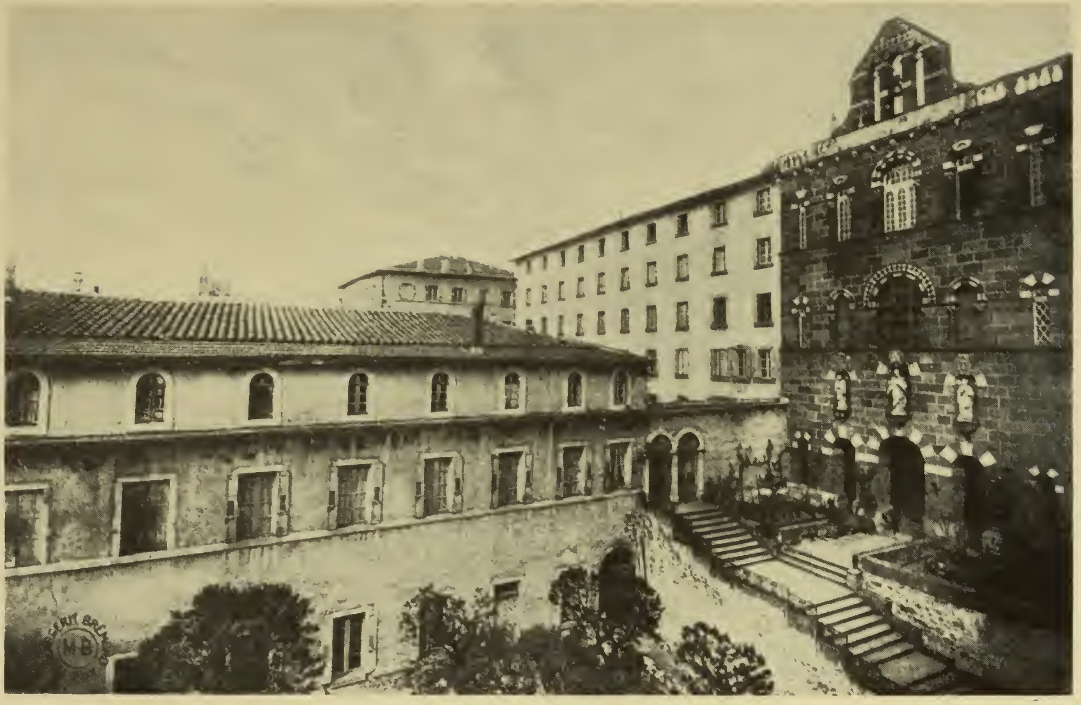
"Given and passed in the Borough of Bas in the convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, today, July 19, 1757, in the afternoon, in the presence of Father Page, Doctor of Theology, parish priest of Bas and Archpriest of Monistrol."

This act has everyone's signature at the end. Then the assembly dispersed. The reception followed in a short time and Marguerite began her novitiate as Sister Saint Francis.

It is not known how long she was there when Michel Fontbonne brought his two eldest daughters, Marie and Jeanne. "I am happy to confide them to you," he said. "Make them good Christians. I hope they will be worthy of their aunt. They love prayer. Their mother and I have never had to urge them to this duty. Our desire is to see their good qualities developed."

No document tells us whether Marie and Jeanne were received as boarders or day pupils. We are inclined to think they were day pupils; first, because there is no evidence of the boarding-school then, and their parents lived quite near the school. Finally, the papers in our possession show us the children sometimes with their companions, at other times with their brother and sisters. Not wishing to write anything of which we are not perfectly sure, we shall have little to tell of their childhood, but the few facts that we know are characteristic. At an early age, Jeanne showed herself created for commanding. It was she who directed the games, animated the recreations and settled quarrels. She was the leader and everyone, finding that quite natural, followed in her train, her older sister always first.

The first memorable event mentioned in the school life of the two sisters is Marie's First Communion. This child, aided by the advice and instructions of her virtuous aunt, prepared herself with the fervor of an angel. Sister Saint Francis had an austere devotion. She was among those who in that day thought that fear, the purifying of oneself and atonement



CRADLE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH

FOUNDED IN LE PUY OCTOBER 15, 1650

are the principal things in the preparation of this great act. With her, fear prevailed over love, and it was with this sentiment of fear that she tried to inspire her niece. "You will never be pure enough to receive Holy Communion!" she said to her. The poor little one burst into tears at the thought of her unworthiness. Jeanne tried to console her sister, to encourage her and to help her in her preparation, and the influence that this little girl exerted on her older sister calmed, comforted and brought peace to her troubled soul.

The date of Marie's First Communion has not been found. She made it before her sister because Jeanne wrote in a notebook in our possession: "I made my First Communion in 1770." Marie was two and one half years older than her sister, therefore, she must have made it in 1768. This proves that Sister Saint Francis was not Superior when the two children were presented as pupils and that Sister of the Visitation was not a member of the community. The latter was received into the community in 1770 by the Superior, Anne Jouve, in religion, Sister Marguerite. Sister Saint Francis was Superior after Sister Marguerite.

In 1769, one year before making her First Communion, Jeanne, at the age of ten, made a vow of virginity. It is rather surprising that so important a deed should be accomplished by such a young child. What does one know at ten? Of what is one capable? Who suggested this thought? Who permitted it? No one knows. Yet, having studied as closely as possible the soul of this child of predilection and seeing in it something unusual, this action may be explained.

At this time, all the convents of Saint Joseph, like those of the Visitation, were independent. Each one had its novitiate and its own receptions and professions. The Bishop of the diocese was the Superior of all the convents and often delegated the parish priest to represent him. The convent of Bas had its postulants and novices who were both pious and fervent. Jeanne saw and admired them and her pure soul spontaneously conceived, in silence, the desire to imitate them. The ceremonies of reception and profession, which took place in the parish church, were, for the neighborhood and the adjacent towns, the occasions of beautiful and delightful feasts. We believe that during one of these ceremonies, when Jeanne heard the novices pronounce their vows, she conceived the idea of binding herself by the vow of virginity; and we are convinced that she did it without asking any advice, not even thinking that she needed any approval to give herself to God. How God must have welcomed her, and what sweet caresses He must have given this good little soul!

After such an act of perfect love, one is not surprised to learn that the next year Jeanne approached the Table of Angels as if she had been one of them. She did not experience Marie's fears; she was all desire and impatience. "How I would wish to die when He enters my heart, so as never more to lose Him," she said the evening before the great day. Jeanne did not die, but she discovered the secret of living in intimate and constant union with the Well-Beloved from Whom she never departed.

CHAPTER III

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED

THE year 1770 marks the memorable date of Jeanne's First Communion and, also, the birth of a little girl, Jeanne Marie, the goddaughter of Jeanne. This rôle of protector gave Jeanne importance, but we know she was important already. Brother and sisters submitted to her supremacy almost without being aware of it. They revolved around her as satellites around their sun. Jeanne was the one who directed, the one whom no one ever dreamed of supplanting. She was a young sovereign, well loved by her little court. As simply as possible, she governed and commanded, while, at the same time, she expanded like a ravishing flower.

Jeanne had her two religious aunts with her on the day of her First Communion. On January 12, 1770, Catherine Dupont was admitted as a member of the Congregation of Saint Joseph. Events happened almost the same as for Sister Saint Francis. The notary, the priests, the Religious and the family were assembled to sign the contract, drawn up in practically the same terms as the other. The act of admission is slightly different. The assembly was not in the convent because the end of the deed proves that the meeting took place in the rectory. The document ends with these words:

> "Given and passed in the aforesaid Bas, in the Parish House this day, January 12, 1770, in the afternoon." [1]

Abbé Theillière, in his "Etude historique," tells us that in the thirteenth century there was in Bas an infirmary into which no patient having a contagious disease could be admitted. An act of 1335 states that "the priests of Bas rendered homage to the Lords of Rochebaron of five pounds currency for the domain, destined for the infirm, with the garden adjoining." This infirmary was mentioned in an act of 1493, then there is no further account of it and all other traces of it have been lost.

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[1] This act tells us, too, that admissions no longer depended solely on the Bishop of Le Puy but also on the directors of the hospital.

A hospital was surely needed in Bas. In 1622, a priest originally from Bas, Father Chanut, who had become provost of the Cathedral of Sisteron, willed the sum of three thousand francs for a hospital in his birthplace where he had been an associate priest. This legacy, very large for that time, could go into effect only after the death of the testator's two brothers. Both brothers died, but there was no hospital in Bas. This was because, generous though it was, Father Chanut's gift was not sufficient for the erection and maintenance of a hospital.

Other gifts came toward the end of the eighteenth century. In 1747, Father Odo de Giry de Saint Cyr, prior of the abbey of Saint Martin of Pontoise, gave to the projected hospital a perpetual annuity of three hundred fifty pounds. By his will of June 16, 1766, Francis de la Rochefoucauld, Marquis of Rochebaron, commandant for the king in the city of Lyons, also gave to this same hospital, "an annual and perpetual income of two hundred fifty pounds to be levied on the priests of the Oratory of Our Lady of Grace, Lyons; and an annual and perpetual income of five hundred pounds to be levied on the hospital of Lyons." In 1770, Father Jean Page named the poor of the hospital in Bas as his universal heirs. He willed them three thousand three hundred thirty-six francs, in those days considered an enormous amount. The authorities had not waited until then to build a hospital. As soon as the income was in proportion to the expenses, they set about the erection of buildings large enough for the reception of the sick and the orphans. On August 7, 1763, Louis XV authorized these by *letters patent.*

In January, 1768, the authorities were asked to bring the Sisters of Saint Joseph to the hospital. "This coming would be useful to the patients, who could be cared for by the Sisters, as well as to the poor, already under their care," who, for lack of funds, were not helped as their needs required. The permission was granted and we read in the new *letters patent:*

"We have authorized and confirmed the establishment of the hospital actually existing in the Borough of Bas and have maintained it in the enjoyment of the property which it possesses; and we wish that, in conformity with the resolutions taken on January 13, 1768, by the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the administrators of the hospital, the house and garden belonging to the Sisters of Saint Joseph be united with the hospital and that the Sisters be admitted to the hospital to serve it, without however, being directly or indirectly formed into a community in this hospital."

The Sisters of Saint Joseph would henceforth devote themselves to Bas in two houses forming but one community, whose offices remained in the convent where were the school, the lace workshop and the novitiate. Some of the Religious of this community were to be connected with the hospital for the care of the sick and the orphans, and the profits of this hospital were to be used for the poor, whom the Sisters already helped. The Sisters of both houses were to be subject to the same Superior, Sister Marguerite.

The arrival of the Sisters of Saint Joseph gave great joy to Father Page. This worthy priest, whose name appears many times in these pages, had governed this parish since 1734. He gave the habit to Catherine Dupont, now Sister of the Visitation, and later he received her vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. In April, 1774, he died full of grace and merit at the age of ninety. His death was a great grief for the community, the parish, and especially for Marie and Jeanne who had walked in the light of his wise counsels since childhood. Jeanne was fifteen and her sister more than seventeen. Their education was drawing to its close.

Canon Rivaux tells us that the parents sent them to the *Pensionnat* of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Le Puy. In Le Puy, as in Bas, Marie and Jeanne Fontbonne were the joy of their teachers, the consolation of their parents, the edification of their companions and the ornament and glory of the boarding-school. They were quoted for a long time as models for the pupils of that house, distinguished for its piety and teaching, because their regularity, work, virtue, perfect dispositions and amiability left such precious memories. He adds that the superiority of Jeanne and her rare qualities "won all hearts and gave her that sweet, natural influence which she unconsciously exercised, with irresistible charm, over all those around her."

It has been impossible to find anything about the boarding-school in Le Puy or the time spent there by the sisters. Jeanne's influence was truly marvelous at Bas-en-Basset. If a dispute arose during recreation, she was made the arbiter; if a difficulty presented itself, they had recourse to her. Marie was the first to make the suggestion: "Let us tell Jeanne, she will settle everything." And, indeed, Jeanne settled all these childish difficulties while waiting to arrange other greater ones.

Their education completed, the paternal hearth was blessed with the life and warmth of the presence of the two sisters. Every morning, they left the house together to go to church. Daily Mass heard, they returned home and devoted themselves to household duties. The convent was not far from their home. Every afternoon, they went to hear spiritual reading with the Sisters and to recite the rosary while doing some handiwork. "We pray better with the Sisters," said Jeanne to her mother. "Together we speak of you to God and to the Blessed Virgin."

The mother smiled sweetly and gladly saw her children go to this holy occupation. Community prayers finished, they took part in the pious reflections on the reading and upon their return home they were brighter, more amiable and more eager to please.

No one knew yet that God had called the two sisters. As they had no secrets from each other, each confided in the other without speaking to their relatives. It seems to us, however, that the mother who observed the increasing fervor of her children had an intuition of this favor from Heaven.

Their desire could not always remain secret. Marie was almost twenty-one and Jeanne eighteen. The time had come to speak. They resolved to make a confidante of their aunt who was now Superior. Was Mother Saint Francis surprised? We cannot be certain. At any rate, she was happy, but took good care not to show her great joy. Far from encouraging her nieces in their pious project, she drew an unattractive picture of the religious life whose duties would be perhaps above their strength and virtue. She begged them to reflect, to pray, to try themselves seriously and not to trust their imagination.

Rather sadly affected by this conversation, Marie and Jeanne went to the church where, prostrate before the tabernacle, opening their souls to the Heart of God, they begged Him to enlighten them, to help them to know His holy will and to give them the means of accomplishing it. Full of confidence in the result of their prayers they felt consoled, strengthened and ready to do what God should ask of them.

Jeanne said: "We are not good enough to be Religious. That is why God permitted our aunt to speak as she did. If you wish, let us redouble our fervor, our submission and our watchfulness in order to merit the grace we want. When I do wrong, you must remind me; and when you forget, I will do you a similar service."

Mother Saint Francis told Sister of the Visitation about their nieces' desire. The latter, now Mistress of Novices, showed no surprise. "I have closely observed our nieces for a long time. It seems to me that God's grace is acting in a perceptible manner in their souls and I have every reason to believe that He is calling them to the religious life. But how are we to announce this news to their parents? Will they be able to resign themselves to separation from their dear little Jeanne?"

The Sisters observed their nieces more closely and lost no opportunity of putting their virtue to the test. They agreed to avoid representing what could be agreeable or spiritually advantageous in the religious life and to show, on the contrary, the difficulties, the sacrifices and the inevitable renunciations that they would meet with therein.

On the nineteenth of March, 1778, there was, at Bas, a reception and profession presided over by Bishop de Gallard. Marie and Jeanne were present. The holy prelate, who was impressed by their recollection and modesty, inquired about them. The Superior told him that they were her nieces. The Bishop had a short interview with them and was charmed with their dispositions. Jeanne's answers particularly pleased him. They seemed so wise that he said to Mother Saint Francis: "Train that child most carefully. She will be, some day, the glory of your congregation."

The happy aunt harbored these prophetic words with deep respect. She communicated them to Sister of the Visitation and both saw in them the sign of a real call of God in the vocation of their brother's children.

Before leaving Bas, Bishop de Gallard said to Mother Saint Francis: "I have a grave communication to give you. I desire to establish a school for the children of Monistrol. I wish to put it in the care of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and I have chosen you as its foundress and first Superior. Prepare for your near departure."

This announcement caused great consternation in the community. The prelate was taking their Mother, but he said, "Your Mother will be given to you again, as soon as the work is established and properly organized." This promise consoled the Sisters of Bas. They proceeded to the election of a temporary Superior and the time for departure was decided.

"I wish you to bring with you some of your holy daughters and your two nieces," said the Bishop. "They will be your first postulants. You will find good subjects in Monistrol. You may begin a novitiate at once. I will always be the father and protector of your convent."

After encouraging the Superior and the Sisters to make their sacrifice generously, the Bishop blessed them and departed quite satisfied and greatly edified at the fervor and spirit of the community. Mother Saint Francis began at once to do the will of her Superior, but it was necessary to tell the parents, who did not yet know their children's wish, before she could take them. It was a delicate mission. Who would undertake it? Each one put the burden on the other. "Well," said Jeanne, "I will go."

Arming herself with supernatural courage, she went to her parents. She revealed the secret of Marie's vocation and begged permission for her to enter. Having obtained this, she implored a similar favor for herself. It was like a thunderbolt for the parents and she had to struggle against their affections by which they tried to hold her. However, the Fontbonnes were too Christian not to submit to God's Will. On July 1, 1778, Marie and Jeanne left Bas with Mother Saint Francis and Sister of the Visitation to go to Monistrol.

It is said that the cloister had attracted Jeanne. At first, she wanted to enter the Poor Clares or the Capuchinesses. This is possible. The fact that we can furnish no proof of it does not mean that this statement is false. All that Mother Saint John thought, desired or accomplished has not been written. We should mistrust legends, but we must not treat all tradition as legends. In doubtful cases, it is wiser to keep from forming any judgment. Besides, it is not rare for a young girl called to religion in an active order, to have at first thought of the cloister. Her soul wants God alone. Instinctively she thinks she will surely find Him in silence and solitude. But, when the time to enclose itself forever arrives it often happens that God, either by a very distinct interior voice, by a providential event or even by the voice of authority, reveals to the soul that He expects something different from it and He demands its consent for a mission less consoling perhaps, but yet eminently useful. If the soul wishes to answer God's appeal fully, it sees itself obliged to sacrifice for Him the sweetness of solitude. It may be that this was the case with Jeanne; but whether or not it was her first idea, she actually spent her life with Saint Joseph, and God has proved by events in her life that He wanted her with Saint Joseph.

CHAPTER IV

MOTHER SAINT JOHN

MOTHER SAINT FRANCIS' reputation had preceded her to Monistrol. She and her companions received a respectful, sympathetic greeting from the inhabitants. The Sisters in the hospital were especially happy. We know from Father Fraisse that there existed, at least since 1662, a community of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in this city.

Monistrol, a walled city, had its leper hospital outside the walls and its hospital within. The lepers disappeared in time and the hospital fell into ruins. Instead of repairing it, as the site which it occupied had become unfavorable on account of change of route from Le Puy, it was decided to build in another place. In 1706, Bishop de la Roche-Aymon gave a barn and garden for the site. Then, in his will, dated March 20, 1732, he gave as an endowment for its use, the price of all the furniture which he had in his castle of Monistrol, the summer residence of the Bishops of Le Puy.

The generosity of the charitable prelate was imitated by others who gave to the poor a shelter provided with large, well-aired rooms and a chapel dedicated to Saint Barbara. Let us say, in passing, that this name seems to explain the invocation to this saint which is found in the evening prayers of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. As there had been a community of the Institute since 1662, the Sisters who served the old hospital left it with the sick to occupy the new buildings. In the hospital they invoked the aid of the patroness of the chapel. Mother Saint John retained this custom of invoking the saint.

On May 3, 1732, His Royal Majesty gave confirmation by *letters patent* to this hospital whose existence was recognized as dating back several centuries under the name of Saint Mary's Hospital, in which the Sisters of Saint Joseph tended the sick under the government of the administrators. A document from the archives says that they had regulated the income since 1668. This document is dated 1677. This leads us to suppose that the Sisters were in charge of the hospital on their arrival in Monistrol. In another document, dated 1821, the Municipal Council recognized, among other things, all quite creditable for the community, that "the hospital had always been ruled and served by the Sisters of this congregation."

On arriving at Monistrol, Mother Saint Francis found a community of her Institute busy with the poor and the sick. She came to establish a second community for the youth of the city. This was not because the city lacked a school. The Ursulines had been in Monistrol since 1634. They had a boarding-school inside the monastery and had even admitted day pupils. It is probable that this day-school was not sufficient, since the Bishop who lived in this city a part of the year and could see things at closer range asked the Sisters of Saint Joseph to open a school for the poorer children.

A site, not far from the episcopal residence, was purchased by Bishop de Gallard. This enabled Mother Saint Francis to start the school and novitiate as soon as she arrived. Classes were filled immediately and fervent postulants soon presented themselves. Jeanne was the soul of the novitiate as she had been of her family and of the school. Her fidelity to the least observances, her amiability and her fervor gave a warmth to this little cenacle, while at the same time her judgment and her fine, delicate mind excited general admiration. This soul which was expanding rapidly, simply and beautifully, was truly very attractive.

We know that her aunt, Mother Saint Francis, an upright, strong, valiant and generous soul, was very rigid. "Living with her two nieces, she feared to listen too readily to the voice of flesh and blood, and thus to excite suspicions always hurtful to discipline and the religious spirit. That is why her direction was almost always severe." She loved her nieces very much; but for this holy soul, to love was to make perfect. Therefore, she chiselled this pure white marble in order to engrave deeply upon it the image of Jesus Christ. Deeply skilled in the religious life, Mother Saint Francis knew that gold is refined and purified in the fire. In order, therefore, to prove and purify their virtue, she did not spare her two nieces. Jeanne especially was subjected to these trials and suffered much from this severity, but that did not keep her from having a sincere affection and profound veneration for her aunt. She understood that this great soul was as good as she was austere, and that she, herself, could but grow spiritually in this rigorous school.

On December 17, 1778, Marie and Jeanne received the religious habit, Marie being known as Sister Saint Teresa, and Jeanne as Sister Saint John. Although the records were burned during the Revolution, we have learned the date of the ceremony from Jeanne's notebook, in which she wrote it herself. The day after the reception, the two Sisters began their apostolate with the young children. Both exercised great zeal. We shall devote ourselves particularly to Jeanne. This will not be difficult since Sister Saint Teresa continued to bring forward her younger sister who displayed in her educational work the rarest qualities, and revealed still better the special gift of government with which Heaven had endowed her.

Years passed by and the Sisters in Bas never ceased asking for their Mother whom the Bishop promised to send back. In 1785, His Lordship remembered his promise. In September, the community in Bas learned that Mother Saint Francis was to return. She was told that the work so well begun by her would henceforth be conducted by Sister Saint John who would succeed her as Superior.

At this unexpected news Mother Saint Francis timidly represented that her niece was one of the youngest members of the community and that she was inexperienced. The Bishop who had seen the Sister at work and who knew the opinion the community had of her, maintained his decision in such a firm manner that the worthy Superior had to submit. She returned to Bas. The election took place on October 5 because the Sisters had to elect their Superior. Sister Saint John was chosen by a plurality of votes. The aunt had governed the community seven years. The niece would govern for seven more after which the storm would burst, dispersing the fervent group.

Mother Saint Francis, who was highly esteemed by everybody, left behind her at Monistrol a blessed memory. Her nieces, her community, in fact the entire population, saw her departure with deep sorrow, but Sister Saint John's sorrow was the deepest. The burden of superiorship appalled her. She was only twenty-six years old and already deep rumblings, which announced the storm, were heard in the distance. Always confident in God, the young Superior assumed her task courageously and soon her rare virtue and indisputable gifts shone in all their brilliancy.

Gifted with an exquisite tenderness, a kind heart and a simple, open nature, Mother Saint John had no trouble in making the family spirit reign in the community. This spirit was made up of a thousand closely linked nothings which gave everybody a frank, cordial and easy manner, revealing confidence, esteem and reciprocal affection.

Mother Saint John was always zealous for the observance of the Rule. She understood and practised religious life in its perfection. In the hours of recreation there was a gayety that opened hearts by making them happy. Canon Rivaux often represents her seated on the grass, surrounded by her entire religious family, conversing joyously. This evangelical picture makes one think of the Saviour seated in the same manner with His disciples and talking familiarly with them. She used to say: "Let us love one another; it is so sweet, so good to be loved! And then it is the law of Our Lord." Every Sister received this sweet counsel in such a way as to follow it in her own conduct.

One remembers that the Sisters of Saint Joseph had their own convent, independent of the hospital, situated quite near the Town Hall and the Bishop's palace. Bishop de Gallard liked to visit this convent and he always left it charmed with the good spirit of the community. "After the example of Saint Francis de Sales in his dear little *beehive* of the Visitation, he used to instruct his dear daughters on the spiritual life and the spirit and obligations of their state." Whenever he was asked a question on this subject, the prelate answered kindly: "Let your good Mother reply to that question." The humble Mother always excused herself on the plea of ignorance, but sometimes the prelate insisted. Then she expressed her thoughts with the simplicity of a child, begging the Bishop to rectify her errors. One might say that in these intimate, fatherly and saintly conversations, the prelate took pleasure in revealing the rare wisdom, the uprightness and judgment of the young Superior.

During one of his visits, Mother Saint John spoke to His Lordship of a desire to establish a workshop where pious people could assemble to work together, whether for the profit of the poor, for their families or for themselves, and where the Sisters would guide the work and, if need be, give instructions. A room was needed in order to start the work. Bishop de Gallard, understanding all the good which could result from this project, favored it by recommending the work to a charitable woman of the city, Madame de Chantemule. The latter, as generous as she was noble, entertained the same views as Mother Saint John and furnished the money necessary to build the shop.

We think that it was in this circumstance that an event related by Canon Rivaux took place. The eminent biographer speaks of a hospital built by Bishop de Gallard. The pious prelate, in order to give proof of the high esteem in which he held the young Superior, wished that she bless the cornerstone after he had done so. Bishop de Gallard did not have any hospital built at Monistrol, but a document tells us that the hospital established by Bishop de la Roche-Aymon was restored and enlarged, and that one of the rooms of the hospital became the meeting-place for the pious people who came to work under the direction of the Sisters. It was probably in these circumstances that, after blessing the cornerstone of the restored hospital, he wished Mother Saint John to do so in her turn.

Her humility suffered much on seeing herself "so little and unworthy, associated with His Lordship in an act so holy."

But, ever as a good Religious, she obeyed simply. Later, when the city had the hospital torn down as it was too confined, having neither court nor garden, the Sisters remembered the cornerstone sanctified by the two blessings. They obtained permission to take it.

At that time, Mother Saint John was no longer at Monistrol, but her successor put the stone in a safe place, and, in 1825, had it enclosed in the outer wall of the chapel over the door of the sacristy which opened into the courtyard. The stone must have passed from one hospital to another, because its character and form seem to belong to the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

The opening of the workshop took place with great solemnity. It was soon filled, and the young Superior could display her great qualities. Prayer, work and good, solid reading created, in this shop, a spiritual atmosphere. The eminently Christian direction given to it filled Monistrol with pious, fervent mothers, and this result won for Mother Saint John the veneration of the entire city. Her maternal tenderness for young girls preserved them from many dangers. Her words fell on their souls like dew from Heaven and her apostolate was so visibly blessed that, with Saint Teresa, the virtuous Mother might say: "I have seen the grace of God, as a mighty eagle with outspread wings, seize these young souls to snatch them from evil and the world and raise them up even to Heaven."

Bishop de Gallard was happy. The good produced by this work was so visible that he could speak only reverently of the one who directed it. The entire city of Monistrol shared his sentiments. Not only did Madame de Chantemule continue her interest in the work, but the hospital, also, benefitted by her generosity and she became attached to the Superior whom she learned to appreciate through this common bond, just as Mother Saint John learned to esteem her generous benefactress. These souls, made to understand each other, were linked in a close and holy friendship.

Things progressed thus until 1789. Mother Saint John was alarmed when she saw Father Ollier embracing the new ideas and seeking to draw with him the priests of his own city and those of the neighboring villages. Father Ollier was a learned, intelligent man but he was consumed with ambition. On December 28, 1790, he announced from the pulpit that he would take the constitutional oath imposed on the clergy. Rome had not yet spoken, and many very good priests, considering the oath as a simple formality, thought they could pronounce it with or without restriction.

On December 28, Father Ollier knew the sentiments of the French hierarchy. The Civil Constitution of the clergy separated the church of France from papal authority. It was no longer the Pope who appointed bishops; it was the Assembly of the Department. It was no longer the bishop who named the rectors, it was the Assembly of the district. It was no longer Rome which settled conflicts between the priests and the faithful; it was the civil authority. No doubt about it, the law was schismatic.

Bishop de Gallard, in December, 1790, wrote an admirable pastoral letter, in which he expressed his motives for refusing to take the oath. He ended with these words: "I have told it respectfully, but I have had to tell it with all the zeal and liberty you should expect from a bishop."

This letter should have changed the dispositions of Father Ollier. It had no effect. On Sunday, January 30, 1791, he took the constitutional oath publicly in the church and, by his advice and example, drew several priests of the city into the schism.

When Pius VI, by his brief of March 10 and that of April 13, made known the apostasy implied in the oath, many priests retracted. Father Ollier was not among them. Mother Saint John's soul was filled with sadness. She felt that a great misfortune threatened the parish and the community. She was not mistaken.

CHAPTER V

DARKENING SHADOWS

IN subordinating religion to the state, the Constituent Assembly considered the bishops and refractory priests as officials whom it had the right to dismiss when they were not sufficiently submissive. Bishop de Gallard knew it; therefore, he was not surprised to see, almost immediately after his refusal to take the oath, preparations for the election of a constitutional bishop for the Department of Haute-Loire, because there was no longer a bishop for the diocese but one for the Department, just as there was a pastor for the commune and not for the parish.

The venerable prelate must have felt a sorrowful indignation on seeing the perjurer, Ollier, present himself as a candidate for the See of Le Puy. The election took place on February 27 and 28, 1791. Ollier was not fortunate. He obtained nine out of one hundred twenty votes; to compensate him, his successful competitor, the intruder, Brioude, made him his Vicar General but kept him in Monistrol.

Bishop de Gallard had to abandon his diocese. Bishops and refractory priests no longer had the right to exercise public functions. This was the only punishment inflicted at that time; private devotion was not yet forbidden. The Bishop could have continued his residence in Le Puy; he preferred to go to Monistrol and, in April, administered the Sacrament of Holy Orders for the last time in the cathedral and then busied himself with his preparations for departure.

In the midst of the sadness of the time, one can imagine the joy of the Sisters of Saint Joseph when learning of the noble conduct of its Bishop and seeing him with the title: "Confessor of the Faith." Worthy relative of Christopher Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, who had refused to bend to Madame Pompadour, for which Louis XV exiled him, Bishop de Gallard could say with the archbishop: "Let them erect the scaffold in the middle of the courtyard. I will mount it to sustain my rights, to fulfil my duties and to obey the laws of my conscience."

Men of this type are embarrassing for those who do not resemble them. The intruder of Monistrol was ill at ease in the neighborhood of the deposed Bishop. He had nothing to fear from him, but Ollier's conscience was in agreement with the Bishop's. This inner voice which would not be stilled made him uncomfortable. He determined that the Bishop must be driven away.

Since the last changes in territory, Monistrol had been raised to the rank of district,—a little glory which puffed it up. It tried to make itself worthy of this honor by espousing all the manias of the period. Bishop de Gallard arrived in Monistrol on May 15, and two days later, on May 17, at the instigation of the intruder, the municipality protested to the district against his presence in the castle. The district protested to the Directory and the Bishop received orders to leave the city.

Grieved at the announcement of this sad news, Mother Saint John hastened to the exiled Bishop. One can imagine the conversation. The virtuous Mother poured out her grief and begged a last blessing from him whom she venerated as a father. The Bishop was very kind and, as a mark of friendship, gave his portrait to the community which received it as a relic. On May 19, 1791, the pious prelate went into exile. After arriving at the hospital a man fired a shot into his carriage. The holy man was not harmed but it was a sad memory to take from that city where his charity had done so much good.

Savoy did not yet belong to France. Desiring to go the least possible distance, Bishop de Gallard went first to Evian. On September 25, 1792, he retired to Switzerland to the Abbey of Saint Maurice in Valais, where he remained until the conquests of the Republican army forced him to go further. With the departure of the Bishop, Ollier went beyond bounds. He had three intruders as curates, and, with them, he threw himself into all the revolutionary excesses, while at the same time, fanatics and malefactors flocked to Monistrol.

It is easy to guess the distress of Mother Saint John and her daughters. The apostasy of one who had been their pastor gave them great consternation. It would be impossible now to take their pupils to church or to go there themselves. They must separate from the faithless minister, but what a privation for them! No more religious help, no more Mass, no more sacraments! To whom would she bring her troubles of soul now, of whom ask advice and how bear the plots that were raised against them? The apostate priest did not pardon their absence from the ceremonies of the constitutional religion. Not only did they remain away from church, but they refused to take part in the Corpus Christi procession; and when the intruder entered the hospital chapel to give benediction, not a Sister was present. This public reproach was the straw which broke the camel's back.

Up to that time, the management of the hospital had received nothing but praise. Things must change. On June 23, 1791, the municipality began its attacks. The magistrate complained that for some time no one could discover who were engaged in the hospital, since, having gone there several times, he could find no one, not even one of the "so-called Sisters of Saint Joseph," who had absented themselves even from the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, when the Host was placed upon the altar of the chapel. This was a most striking scandal. The magistrate asked the municipality to consider whether it should refer the subject of the administration to the district of the city or to the Department.

On September 12, of the same year, the magistrate recommenced his attacks. Let us listen to part of his denunciation. It is a model of the style of the epoch:

> "If there be ministrations necessary and useful to the public, that of the hospital should be among the number and should be placed in the rank of the others; consequently, one must hasten to establish and organize an administration worthy of the wishes

of the municipality and which will do honor to our native town. It is time to pluck out vices, to say nothing of scandal. The poor of this house have fallen under the direction of the Sisters of Saint Joseph who instruct them in such a manner as to keep them from going to Mass or parish catechism. Behold to what they expose these miserable victims who instead of being brought up in Christianity are in the greatest danger of falling into fanaticism! What a horror for this city and what reproaches would it not deserve if, after receiving so much praise for patriotism and zeal everywhere, you neglect to organize that administration now." [1]

The municipality formed a Council of Administration, the schismatic priest was president, and the magistrate, official trustee.

The position of the Sisters became more critical every day. He who caused the banishment of the Bishop was eager to drive out those who remained faithful to him, but the means for doing so were not yet ready. To console himself, he excited against them the least desirable in Monistrol, the rioter and the ne'er-do-well that one finds ready for anything. As Ollier was appointed member of the Administrative Council of the district on September 12, 1791, he had been attending their sessions since October 17. It was easy for him to be on the watch for the desired expulsion.

While waiting for the opportune moment, he aroused his aids. One day they went armed with hatchets ready to break down the doors if they were refused admittance. Mother Saint John did not give them this trouble. She appeared alone and met the excited mob. They asked her to swear that for the future the Sisters would obey the constitution and assist at Mass. Neither their cries nor their threats frightened her. She remained calm and firm in her refusal. When the fanatics tried to advance into the house to see the Sisters and obtain from them what their Mother refused, she placed herself at the door and with great dignity and coolness said: "It is useless to present yourselves to the community. Here, the head answers for the body."

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[1] M. Fraisse, Manuscrit: *L'hôpital de Monistrol.*

The simple, modest Religious made such an impression on this crowd as to calm it. The men withdrew saying: "What a woman that is! There is nothing to gain from her!" Such a surrender did not enter into Ollier's plans. He must return to the charge, but this time, artifice will be used. It will be arranged to see not the Superior, but the Sisters, and to try to reason with them. The had recourse to diverse stratagems to separate the body of the community from this head, whom, bold as they were, they dared not resist. This was useless, because the vigilant sentinel was always there and baffled all their plans.

The hour was approaching when the enemy would have the advantage. The apostles of the new ideas were not sufficiently sure of the general sympathy. They formed Committees of Supervision. On August 12, 1792, Ollier became a member of one of these committees. Two days after the appointment of Ollier, on August 14, the Assembly decreed the oath of Liberty and Equality.

This oath caused a moment's hesitation among true Catholics, always disposed to obey provided that the order be not in opposition to conscience. Some priests, worthy of all esteem, agreed to take it. Father Eméry, Superior of Saint Sulpice, a very virtuous man and a learned theologian, was among them. Others, on the contrary, saw a snare in this oath. The word "liberty" may signify: no more dogma, no more morality, no more vows and no more indissoluble marriage. The word "equality" may mean: no more authority and no more private ownership. Soon there was no doubt. The Archbishop of Lyons and the Bishops of other dioceses wrote from their exile to forbid the oath. At that time, it was demanded only of priests and public officials, therefore, the Sisters of Saint Joseph were not then uneasy on that subject.

In 1789, The National Assembly had decreed the suppression of all monastic orders in which the Religious took solemn vows, this being equivalent to death in the eyes of the state which annulled their civil rights. The vows were abolished under pretext that they were contrary to liberty and the monasteries had to be emptied because society was not benefitted by them. The Assembly insinuated that almsgiving and the service of the sick and poor did not serve society, morally or physically.

They pretended to ignore simple vows allowing those congregations which taught or cared for the sick to continue if they had been established for more than a century. On August 18, 1792, their death also was decreed. The community of Monistrol must, therefore, disappear. Mother Saint John delayed as long as she could to carry out the decree, but the time came when the Sisters had to separate. A document informs us that "on September 29, 1792, the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Monistrol abandoned their convent and went to their homes."[2]

However, all had not gone. Article 2 of the decree was stated in these terms:

> "Nevertheless in the hospitals and charitable homes, the same persons will continue as formerly the service of the poor and the care of the sick by private title under the supervision of the municipal and administrative bodies."

As the Sisters of Saint Joseph were in charge of the hospital, Mother Saint John thought that, by virtue of this decree, she could avail herself of this tolerance, while wearing a secular dress. She sent all the Sisters away but one, with whom she remained together with her own sister and Sister Martha, a lay Sister whose family name we do not know. They devoted themselves to the sick and the poor. Since they were authorized by Article 2 to remain in Monistrol, Ollier was to obtain, by force, what he could not get willingly.

We have said that the Sisters did not go to church, and the report already referred to proved that the constitutionalists were not insensible to this silent disapproval. We know that the community suffered much from the want of religious help, but we do not believe that they were entirely deprived of it. Canons and religious priests, driven from their homes, could practise private devotions since the nation tolerated it conformably to Article 10 of the "Declaration of the Rights of Man," which provided that no one need be uneasy about his religious convictions. We have a list in our possession of the faithful priests of Monistrol, among them Father Hubert (Jean André Vacher) of the Capuchin monastery of Monistrol. It is to him we are indebted for Mother Saint John's becoming the restorer of the Institute.

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[2] Archives Départementales de la Hte-Loire, Fonds de la Révolution (2e Registre des pétitions des municipalités, 1792-1793).

Doubtless, this priest and others celebrated Mass in private homes, perhaps for the Sisters. The oath of Liberty was soon to deprive them of this last liberty, but then the Sisters were not to be in Monistrol. While waiting, it is almost certain that they had the consolation of assisting at Mass said by a Catholic priest and of receiving absolution from him.

These Revolutionists wanted the Sisters to take part in the Constitutional cult, and were determined to secure this by force. On September 22, the Convention established the Republic; on October 2, 1792, Ollier was to celebrate, in the parish church, the Mass for the opening of the session. Canon Rivaux places the celebration wrongly in Bas in 1793. We are convinced that it took place in Monistrol in 1792, because after January, 1793, the Convention abolished the constitutional cult and all religions, recognizing only that of the Supreme Being. Mother Saint John left Monistrol a few days after the celebration of the Mass.

Ollier said the Mass on October 2, 1792, and requested that all the Sisters, except one, be present. She was excused, as the sick must not be left without an infirmarian. In order that the Sisters might more easily be seen, kneeling benches were placed for them in the choir. These benches must not be empty. They would see to that. The mob went to the hospital beating the drums. The men rang the bell and asked for Jeanne Fontbonne and her Sisters. Without any hesitation, all presented themselves.

"What do you want, my friends?" she asked.

"We want to take you and your companions to the Mass which the patriot priest is going to say in the parish church."

"Never," replied Mother Saint John in a dignified, confident manner; "never will we consent to communicate with an apostate priest."

"We would rather die than renounce the Faith," added the Sisters unanimously.

Upon this refusal, they were seized and dragged by force to the church. The men, continuing to beat the drums, cried out: "Make way for these three citizenesses whom we are leading to church." The Sister who was connected with the hospital before the separation, on September 29, was left to care for the patients. All resistance was useless. The Sisters, calm and dignified, allowed themselves to be led to the kneeling benches, but these strong Christians refused to kneel. They stood erect during the entire ceremony giving no sign of participation in the sacrilegious service.

Leaving the church, Mother Saint John protested aloud against the violence which they had suffered. "Know well," she said, "that by force alone, have we been led to the sacrilegious Mass of an apostate priest. Our hearts and wills had no part therein. We remain inviolably attached and faithful to the true Catholic Faith, and no violence shall ever be able to separate us from it."

The crowd answered by furious shouts. Ollier remarked that they would not be there much longer. He had helped to banish the Bishop. He would be able to drive them away. On October 14, 1792, the Sisters were forced to leave Monistrol. Mother Saint John and her companions went to Bas to her father's home.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE REIGN OF TERROR

THOSE were dark days. However, the joy of Mother Saint John's parents was unbounded when they again saw their daughters and Sister Martha. The day after their arrival, the three Sisters, dressed as seculars, resumed the practice of their Rule. The patriarchal fireside made it easy and soon the paternal home had the appearance of a convent, having even a sanctuary.

Bas, as well as Monistrol, had its apostate priests; but there were other priests around whom the true Christians gathered to hear Mass, to go to confession and to receive Holy Communion. To make it possible for the sick to be present, the priests always consecrated extra particles. The Sisters had charge of these Hosts. A piece of furniture in the quietest part of the house served as a tabernacle, as in the time of persecution in the first centuries of Christianity.

We have no knowledge of the joy which filled these virgin souls, but we can imagine with what happiness they visited their Divine Spouse and with what ardor they prayed for their Sisters, for the persecuted priests, for the faithful exposed to so many dangers whether of soul or body, and for France, now in the throes of madness.

It happened, many times, that pursued priests sought shelter in the Fontbonne home, because persecution had made great headway. Refusal to take the constitutional oath prevented the priests from performing their duties publicly, but they still possessed the right of private devotion. It was not the same with the oath of Liberty and Equality. The priest refusing to take the oath must leave French territory, and many priests left France, not so much through fear of punishment, as to preserve for the Church the priests she would need when the tempest was over.

Still, the Catholics of France must not be left without spiritual aid. For them, although they knew well to what they exposed themselves, many priests refused to leave; or they came back again and were forced to hide like malefactors. The Fontbonne home was always ready to receive these priests. The so-called patriots suspected it. This caused several investigations. Fortunately, the Fontbonnes were on the alert. Their prudence, calmness and coolness served them. They were generally able to get out of critical situations. Once they had reason to fear; a priest was there in his hiding place. The so-called patriots must have been informed of this, because they arrived more ferocious than ever. They visited the house, saw the Sisters at work, but discovered nothing. However, having arrived at a remote part of the house, they found a low, secret door, the one giving access to the hiding place.

"What is this door?" one of them asked. "You must open it."

"Very willingly, citizen," the mother answered hastily.

Deceived by this assurance, the questioner did not wait for his answer. He turned, led the soldiers to another part of the house and went away, having found no one. Many prayers of thanksgiving were offered that day. These were not the worst days. The year 1792 was rich in events. On August 10, royalty was abolished. On September 22, the Republic was proclaimed and the Convention governed France.

While waiting, Michel Fontbonne had a duty to perform. Before the dispersal, the Sisters had had some financial difficulties. Mother Saint John appealed to her father, who lent them some money.[1] The nation had made itself the proprietor of the Sisters' possessions and the lender thought it would assume their debts. A document informs us that on October 21, 1792, Michel Fontbonne of Bas made a petition to redeem the money which he had lent to the Sisters of Monistrol. He was told that this loan did not appear in the daily registers of the community. For the time being, things remained as they were. Later, the two sisters made a similar appeal, but we do not know the result.

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[1] Archives Départmentales, Fonds de la Révolution (2e Registre des pétitions des municipalités, 1792-1793).

On January 21, 1793, Louis XVI was guillotined. "No more king! No more tyrant!" cried the mob. "The people are sovereign."

On April 4, 1793, the Convention proclaimed the most revolting of all the revolutionary laws,—*The Law of Vigilance.* This law paid homage to all wicked passions. Everyone watched and denounced. They denounced an enemy to get revenge; a rival to get his place; a creditor in order not to pay him; their neighbors because they were afraid of being denounced by them, or from fear of not appearing Republican enough. They denounced for all kinds of unbelievable reasons.

One day Michel Fontbonne was denounced. His name appeared on the list of suspects. It is useless to depict the anguish of the family, useless to speak of the supplications that the three Sisters made to God. At last they breathed freely,—the father's name was crossed from the list. For that time, threats had no results. But they did not cease trembling for one reason or other. The commissaries were always there. After the father, the son was denounced.

War was being raged on the frontier. Soldiers were needed. Paris commanded that every commune bear the expense of equipping one volunteer cavalryman. The authorities had just learned that Claude Fontbonne had a new coat, a waistcoat and trousers which he had purchased at Chapelon's. These things were just what they wanted. The municipal registers tell us that on March 23, 1793, these clothes were demanded from Claude Fontbonne; but he answered that, as he was obliged to arm and equip the one who replaced him in the recruiting of the army, he believed himself dispensed from giving it to any other person. He requested the deed of his declaration and signed it.[2]

These events were the occasions of uneasiness for the Fontbonne family. In such times, nothing was so desirable as to live forgotten, and they were not forgotten. From day to day, the tempest became more terrible. A deputy said: "The nation will be settled in the houses of prayer, in workshops, useful to the state, where the unfortunate will find his subsistence with work."

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[2] Archives de Bas-en-Basset, Hte-Loire.

In Bas, the convent became the workshop. They still show the rooms used for making shot and gunpowder. The church was made a hall for meetings and for feasts. From the Fontbonne home, the people could be seen assembling to listen to the reading of the laws which replaced the gospel; and one heard the songs of liberty instead of sacred hymns. Meanwhile, the prisons were being filled with suspected persons. Many were guillotined. The vicinity was a place of sorrows for the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

However, in the midst of these wild scenes, the nation continued to assume the semblance of justice in paying a mock pension to the dispossessed Religious whose houses were furnished by *letters patent*. This was the case with the community of Monistrol. Our three Sisters had the right to the pension. Several other Religious, men and women, natives of Bas, but belonging to different orders, had a right to it also. The settlement of this pension was suspended because the beneficiaries had not yet procured their certificates of residence and patriotism.

This certificate, a new requirement of the Convention, was obligatory for all citizens. Unless willing to emigrate, the most implacable enemies of the Revolution had to produce it. To submit to the law, the Religious who returned to their country were forced to ask for it. As all had the right to the pension, they decided to unite and made a common petition. The municipalities of the country and even those of the cities which were not favorable to the Convention were not niggardly in giving these certificates. At Bas, particularly, these civic qualifications were distributed generously. A petition, sent to the Directory of the Department, is inscribed on October 15, 1793, in the seventh Register of Deliberations. The petition succeeded and the Religious received the pension.

There was constant watching everywhere. The police presented themselves at any moment and whenever they appeared, one wondered what they wanted. Anguish tore their hearts. On September 26, 1793, Mother Saint John saw their return. This time it was not Michel Fontbonne's person but his profession that they sought. That day the authorities commanded the shoemakers of Bas to make shoes for the young men of the canton who were leaving for the army. No shoes were found at any shoemaker's. In the home of Michel Fontbonne, the younger, they found a calf's skin suitable to make the uppers for the shoes and a piece of leather for making the soles. At the home of Michel Fontbonne, the elder, was found a quantity of leather sufficient for making the upper part of about five pairs of shoes. They all declared themselves willing to work with pleasure for the fatherland, but they confessed to not having enough furnishings on hand, nor were they able to purchase much leather. It was too costly. Michel Fontbonne declared himself to be unable to work on account of weak eyesight.

The report of this request was sent to the Directory, which answered by the following note:

> "By express order of the Convention from the fifth day of the first decade all the shoemakers must furnish, in the interim of each decade, five pairs of shoes."

The order was sent, individually, to the shoemakers of Bas on November 16, 1793. These men went together before the municipality and again stated their claims which were transmitted in the following terms:

> "On November 18, Michel Fontbonne, the elder; Claude Dupont, another Michel Fontbonne, shoemakers of this Borough of Bas declare that age and weak eyesight would never permit them to make such a large quantity of shoes; that, moreover, not having leather suitable for making them, it was impossible to make any unless the municipality was willing to procure for them the leather needed for this work, and, in that case they were disposed to make as many as they could."

On November 26, Claude Fontbonne, the brother of our two Sisters, married Louise Marguerite Françoise Pleynet. Claude was twenty-seven; his bride twenty-two. Claude, inheritor of his worthy parents' virtues, later gave three children to the Church: Jacques became a priest and missionary in America, and two daughters, Antoinette and Jeanne, entered the Sisters of Saint Joseph and went with their brother to the missions in Missouri. Their mother was the perfect type of Christian wife: good, humble, modest and charitable. She made her home a real sanctuary of virtue and a nursery of saints.

Towards the end of 1793, the oath of Liberty and Equality, demanded, up to that time, of the priests and public officials, became obligatory for all Religious pensioned by the nation. This oath, having been forbidden by the Bishop of Le Puy and other bishops, the Sisters of Saint Joseph could not take it. The Sisters of Saint Joseph included Mother Saint John, Sister Saint Teresa, Sister Martha, Mother Saint Francis and all her daughters who were living with their families like the Sisters of Monistrol, since they were no longer permitted to live in community.

In Bas, the revolutionary passions were less rabid than in many other cities. Certain municipalities of Forez and Vivarais simply placed the law on the statutes and did not speak of the oath. It is not known how they settled this with the Directories. The municipality of Bas, however, demanded the oath and not one of the Sisters of this city took it. All were firm in their faith. There was no security for them after this refusal.

Bas-en-Basset extends over a plain and a thickly wooded mountain. Obliged to leave the peaceful home and to lead a wandering life, like the proscribed priests, the Sisters sought shelter in these woods. During the day they were hidden in the forest but at night friendly homes harbored them. Mother Saint John and her companions did, undoubtedly, as the others. Hoping that they would be able to evade such great vigilance, they returned discreetly to their father's home, where, although they never went out, they were eventually discovered.

One day, some impetuous Revolutionists rushed into the house and demanded the Sisters who had taken shelter there. To avoid search which would have compromised priests who at that time had taken refuge in her father's house, Mother Saint John and her two companions presented themselves at once. They were taken to the prison of Saint Didier about ten miles from Yssingeaux.

CHAPTER VII

"IN THE STRENGTH OF THIS BREAD"

THE three Sisters were cast into the convent of the Augustinians, now a jail, the name Saint Didier having been changed to Montfranc. In Bas, the parents, bowed down with grief, were ignorant of what might happen to their dear daughters. They knew that prisons were badly kept and that the prisoners did not receive sufficient nourishment. The government knew it also, and relied on the relatives and friends to furnish what was needed. The authorities were rather liberal in easily permitting visits. One could see the prisoners, talk with them and bring them provisions. It was the good side of a very bad business.

The Fontbonne family never failed to use this permission. In succession, the father, the mother, the brother and the sisters went on foot the ten miles which separated Bas from Saint Didier to ease the lot of those they loved. These visits were awaited, not so much for the material advantages that they brought to the captives, as for the joy of heart they brought with them.

The news from Bas was more or less consoling. Mother Saint Francis and her daughters continued to wander in the woods. The Blessed Sacrament was taken from the Fontbonne home after the departure of the Sisters. Mother Saint Francis received It and as in the time of the early Christians carried It with her. "United with her companions in some little hut or hidden place in the forest, she placed her Treasure on a corporal and all adored Him Who deigned to encourage them with His Divine Presence wherever the tempest drove them."[1]

Sister of the Visitation, also, wandered in the outlying districts and joined Mother Saint Francis whenever she could do

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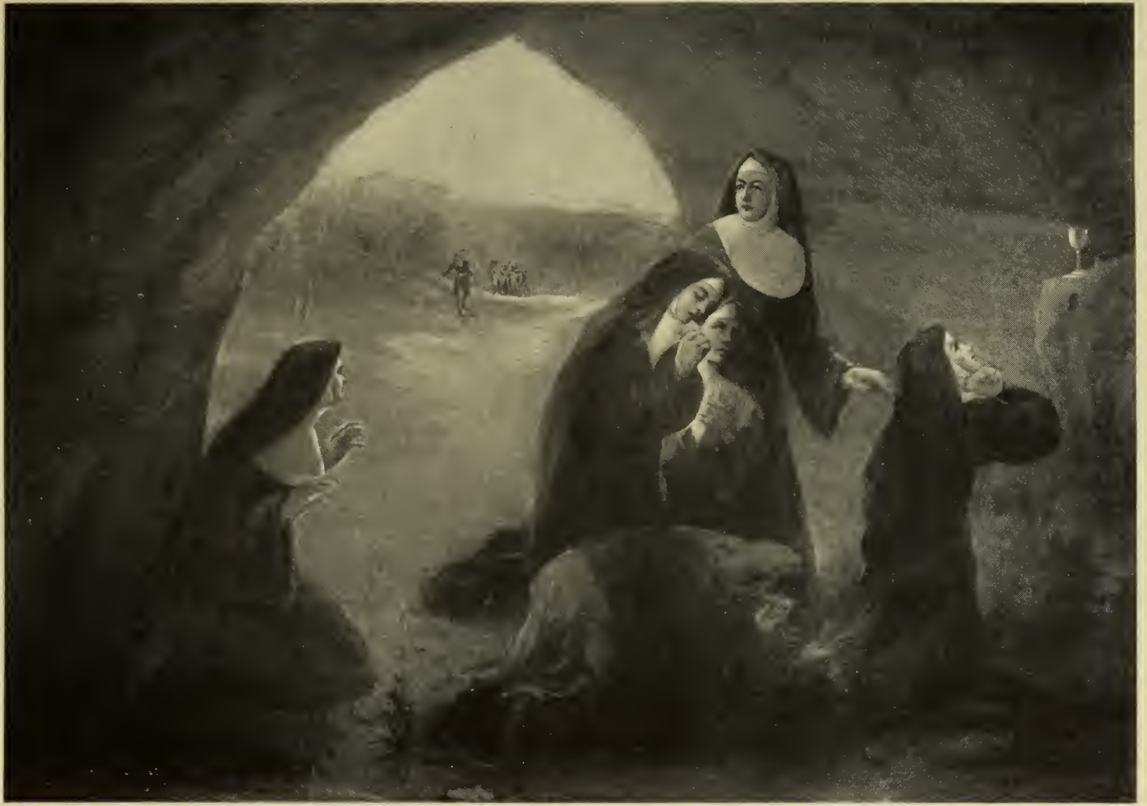
[1] M. Rivaux.



FLIGHT WITH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

so without danger. Once, having found refuge with a friend of the family, someone came in haste to warn them that the Revolutionists were coming for the customary search. Immediately, Sister of the Visitation threw herself into the nearest bed. The mistress of the house pretended to take care of a patient who caused her much anxiety. The patriots entered. She excused herself for not being able to receive them as she would like. She served them several bottles of wine begging them to take this refreshment. They accepted willingly and went away satisfied. Sister of the Visitation was saved.

Easter came, but there were no Catholic priests in the neighborhood. Prudence had driven them, for the time being, to the high mountains of Ardèche. Mother Saint Francis and her companions made their way over mountains and through forests to the Shrine of La Louvese where they found a priest who administered the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. They had to suffer great fatigue and brave many dangers to reach there, but they brought back with them new strength and greater courage.

They needed this courage, for a few days later Mother Saint Francis was surprised, recognized, arrested and taken to Montfranc where she found her two nieces and Sister Martha. What a mingling of joy and sorrow at this reunion! What a new anguish for the Fontbonne family and for the Sisters deprived of their Mother! These Sisters had had much to suffer. Their uncertain, nomad life lacked neither privations nor sacrifices. Their relatives and friends tried to ease their lot, but the laws of espionage made life very dangerous.

The family of one of them, Sister Clavaron, had property at one side of the woods. It was easy for these relatives to be useful to the fugitive virgins. In Bas, they still speak of the father who departed every morning, his bag slung over one shoulder, his pickax and hatchet on the other, pretending to go to work, while, in reality, he was taking the daily food to his daughter and her companions.

All news, happy or alarming, reached the captives, who were eager to receive it. Passing unceasingly from hope to fear,

COLLEGE OF OUR LADY OF ... LIBRARY

their prayers for their dear ones were made more pleading every day. They were freer in their captivity than those who were apparently so, because these latter could not make a single move without betraying themselves.

Mother Saint John and her companions transformed their prison into a place of retreat. It became a convent, a place of prayer. The heart of Mother Saint John overflowed with joy; her cell was her palace, the vestibule of Heaven; her chains, jewelled bracelets of great price. Deprived of hearing Mass and receiving the Sacraments, she visited, in spirit, the closed churches, desiring to water with her tears and blood those desecrated sanctuaries; and she daily offered her life in expiation of the sacrileges that had stained them.

By her calmness and serenity, Mother Saint John confounded her jailers. They commanded her to work on Sunday and to observe the Decade [2] but she said quite simply: "If I had been willing to do that I should not now be in prison." Disconcerted, one of them threatened to separate her from her companions and to enclose her alone in a dungeon. "Which way leads to it?" she asked. Mother Saint Francis also, with her great, generous soul must have played her part in the prison; but, in spite of all our researches, we have found nothing relating to her.

Monistrol was a constant subject of uneasiness for Mother Saint John. The Sister whom she had left in the hospital was able, while wearing the secular dress and under her family name, to care for the sick during the entire year of 1793. On February 25, 1794, the magistrate learned that one of the "Sisters" of the hospital had not taken the oath. There was great consternation. She must be replaced without delay.

Mother Saint John knew that and she was worried. What would happen to her dear daughter? It really happened that she found means of remaining at the bedside of the sick during the entire Revolution and she did a great deal of good. But the kind Mother could not foresee the future and things appeared very dark.

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[2] "The Revolutionists did away with Sunday and substituted one day's holiday in ten, thus dividing the month into three decades. It would be an act of apostasy to celebrate the decade." *Sisters of Saint Joseph of Annecy*, p. 9.

One day the door of the prison opened to admit several holy people, among them Ursula Verdier of Monistrol "who had led," the warrant said, "a life as scandalous as it was disedifying, holding to a baneful, pernicious doctrine."[3] Ursula Verdier was one of those modest, pious, young women without any pretensions who, under the name of *Béates,* gave great services in the out-of-the-way hamlets in the mountain regions of Velay, Vivarais and other districts. The inhabitants of these villages, isolated from all assemblies, gave a lodging to one of these good women. They brought them wood, eggs and dairy products. In exchange, these *Béates* busied themselves with the children who were too young to accompany their parents to work. They took care of the little ones, taught them how to read and pray, instructed them in catechism and prepared them for their First Communion. In the winter evenings, the young women, who assembled to work together, learned how to make lace, prayed a little and laughed with pure, frank laughter which gave joy to the heart and refreshment from all fatigue.

Ursula Verdier was not a Religious. She had taken no vows. She did not have the government approval and consequently was not obliged to swear fidelity to the Republic. What had the Revolution to fear from her? Absolutely nothing, without doubt, but, in virtue of a decree of Citizen Solon Reynaud, representative of the people, Ursula Verdier and all those women called *Béates,* "having their minds fascinated by these abominable creatures called priests" had to take the oath.

Ollier and Chambouvet were there, the latter a false curate of Bas. His sympathy for the Revolution earned for him the rectorship of Relournac where he showed himself an ardent persecutor of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, "to punish them for having lent their chapel to the Catholics in October, 1791." He was now Commissioner of Public Instruction of Monistrol.

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[3] Archives Départementales de la H^te^-Loire, Fonds de la Révolution, 1^er^ Registre de correspondance de l'agent national, an II.

With an Ollier and a Chambouvet, the innocent *Béates* could not be forgotten. From the time of Reynaud's order, the municipality began searching for these humble ones who had given their services as often as they were needed. The commissaries brought back a list of twenty-seven names gleaned from the hamlets in the Cantons of Bas and Craponne. The twenty-seven *Béates* were asked to take the oath. As heroic as they were modest, all answered by a noble refusal. As a result, they were sent to the jail in their district. That is why Ursula Verdier was in Montfranc. She received a sisterly welcome and took her place in the circle of prayer and immolation which was increasing daily.

One is not surprised at Mother Saint John's uneasiness about her daughter in Monistrol. Many heartrending things were taking place there. In the house where she had spent the beginning of her religious life, the rooms had been converted into workshops to make clothes for the troops. Later, on December 8, 1793, Citizen Roman became its proprietor. It seems that affairs were not being carried on honestly, for, on February 6, 1794, Moret, notary of Monistrol, who had auctioned the furniture of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, was accused of extortion. Ollier, named president of the Directory of the district, after renouncing his ecclesiastical duties, was accused of embezzlement. On June 6, 1794, he was arrested and taken to Paris. On July 16, he was condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal and was guillotined the same day.

One can form an idea of the emotions of the prisoners of Montfranc when on July 22, 1794, they received the announcement of his execution. How did the perjurer die? Did he persist to the end in his apostasy? Did he utter a cry of repentance? Such were their questions. No one could answer them. We certainly know that all of them, forgetting what they suffered from this man who should have been their support, thought only of pitying his lot and exclaiming: "O God, have mercy on him!"

What happened at Craponne caused some anxiety to our captives. After closing the convent of Saint Joseph, it was opened again to receive suspected persons, of whom there were so many that vigilance became difficult. Some succeeded in escaping. On March 10, 1794, the authorities decided to take precautions. The commissaries drew up their report and "the recluses were invited to bar the windows at their own expense by means of rods placed five inches apart."

Craponne, provided with a good and numerous clergy, had not received the revolutionary ideas kindly. The intruding parish priest in particular had no success. As the true priest was forced by him to abandon the church, he was left there almost alone. Private devotion not having been forbidden at first, the twenty associate priests of the city, faithful to their duty, celebrated Mass in the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Joseph where nine-tenths of the population grouped around the refractory priests.

The democrats were furious. We have the proof of it from the following lines in the report of the reception given to Father Privat, deputy to the Constituent Assembly at the time of his return to Craponne on October 23, 1791. Needless to say, they were written by a constitutionalist.

"All the aristocrats proceeded on the route from Lyons. The next day, after rising, Father Privat had a visit from all the monarchists at the head of whom was M. Porrat, Mayor, with the founder of the Monarchist Club. All devotees and aristocrats cried out: 'Long live our pastor!' and they kissed his soutane. Then, at ten o'clock he celebrated High Mass in the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. He was admirably received with cheers and clapping of hands. It is the meeting-place of the separated religious cult, that the spirit of fanaticism had established by the counsels given in the letters of the Superior. This general joy in the convent church was followed by the *Te Deum* with double chant, one by the Sisters and the other by the fanatics. One saw the refractory priest smile at this reception.

"In the evening there was a bonfire around which took place rejoicings and iterated cries: 'Long live our pastor, the martyr of religion!' This caused the soul of the 'living saint' to be tickled agreeably. Let us watch impatiently for the surprising effects of the decree which will oblige him to take the oath of fidelity, which, until now only annoys his soul but will soon scatter all the false appearances of fanaticism."

The hatred in these lines is readily seen and one feels no surprise at seeing the ardor which the so-called patriots showed when trying to separate the people from this priest, now so warmly fêted. It was not an easy thing to do.

The religious and political faith was so tenacious in these souls that despairing of success, on August 5, 1792, the "Friends of the Constitution" felt the need of creating a *Committee of Supervision* to assure the spread of these new ideas. On January 19, this committee asked for two cannons. "We are," it wrote, "surrounded by enemies of the public good, fanatics and wicked people. We can control them only by force." Two days later, the king was executed and his power was usurped with resulting unhappiness "to these mountains" and to the rest of France.

The day when the members of the district drew up the order to bar the windows of the convent, now a jail, fifty-four Religious of different orders were imprisoned there. Eight belonged to the convent which was their prison. We pass over many of the imprisonments which this convent witnessed.

It must be noted however, that the Confessors of the Faith did not suffice for Craponne. It had its martyrs. One of its sons, Father Antoine Clavel, a priest of great talent and virtue, returned, after his ordination in Le Puy, 1750, to his own parish as curate. Forced to hide after the refusal of the oath, Father Clavel wandered from one place to another, until, one day, he took shelter with his own family hoping to be in safety for a short time. Where, at such a time, could one have safety? To perform an act of patriotism, a servant told the police of Craponne. They came and arrested the priest, his brother, Jean Baptiste, his sister-in-law, Catherine Boutin; his sister, Marguerite Clavel, a Sister of Saint Joseph who had taken refuge in her father's home after the closing of her convent, and finally Mathieu Bouchoud, another servant of the Clavels.

They were taken without delay to Le Puy; and, after a rapid examination, their judgment was pronounced. Antoine Clavel, former priest, Jean Baptiste Clavel and Catherine Boutin, Clavel's wife, were condemned to death for having violated the laws of the Republic. On January 21, 1794, anniversary of the death of Louis XVI, the three were guillotined on La Place du Marthouret. Marguerite Clavel and Mathieu Bouchoud, sent to prison on January 19, were freed by some inexplicable turn of events on January 21.

Some days before his death, Father Clavel wrote to the Superior of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, a prisoner in her own convent, the following letter:

"Do not be surprised if, on the eve of your captivity, you were seized with a secret trouble, the cause of which you did not know. Human nature being terrified, the demon made a last effort to force you to take the oath, which, apparently, would have brought peace to your troubled soul, but which would have caused real sorrow after the return of your reason. In the garden, Jesus Christ felt a fear which made Him tremble and beg His Father not to compel Him to drink the chalice of His passion, but after having given human nature a little of what it demanded, recovering Himself, He cried out: 'Father, not my will but Thine be done.' This submission brought an angel who consoled Him. The day after your imprisonment, your trouble ceased and peace took its place. It is the reward of the sacrifice you made to God in refusing to take the oath, preferring captivity to the advantages which the world offered you, had you adored at the altar of the fatherland.

"Do not seek any occasion for martyrdom; that would be presumption. If God sends it to you, do not fly from it; that would be apostasy. Martyrdom is the most signal grace that you could receive from your Spouse. Do not cast frightened glances at the future, 'for sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,' but pray every morning to the God of mercy to give you each day, what is necessary to love Him and please Him in all your actions. All the profanations that you have seen during the week, show you God's anger toward His people and call you to redouble your fervor and mortification and to draw to you His loving regard. Let us hope that irreligion, having reached its height, will find its zenith in the highest stage of hatred. Pray Heaven it may be soon, and let this be the object of your petitions.

"We should hide in the Heart of Jesus in order that we may not see all these sacrileges. Let us find our conversation in Heaven. Let us often carry our thoughts there, as to our real fatherland where the fury of the municipality cannot close the doors against us. We are fortunate that it is not able to climb thither, for if it could scale the skies, it would drive out the Holy Trinity, and Heaven would be destroyed.

"I send you a letter in common, which I have written hastily. If you judge proper to read it to your companions, you may do so, under the express prohibition that you tell no one its author. Make no mention of me unless to my two sisters, members of your community, and to Mother Saint John. Eventually you will have the kindness to note for me what impression it made. If you do not find it convenient to communicate it, burn it with this letter or make use of it as you wish.

"I beg of you by the tenderness of Jesus Christ to pray for the Church and above all for me that the Lord have mercy on me and that He cast a favorable glance upon His people and that He have mercy on all.

"I am, with all possible reverence,
"Your very humble and obedient servant."

Martyrdom is the greatest of graces. When the Sisters in Montfranc learned of the death of Father Clavel, Mother Saint John cast herself on her knees, raised her hands toward Heaven and exclaimed: "Saint Clavel, pray for us!" After her, all the little cenacle repeated the same prayer, and the Sisters continued to be torn between grief and joy.

About June 20, 1794, posters placed on the walls told them of the execution of two Sisters of Saint Joseph. The account of this martyrdom is too beautiful to pass unnoticed. On June 16, 1794, five brigades of soldiers led a convoy of twelve prisoners from Craponne to Le Puy. There were three men, eight women and a child. Among the eight women was Jeanne Marie Aubert, a Sister of Saint Joseph. The next day, June 17, another Sister of the same Institute joined the twelve prisoners in the chief town of the department. She was Marie Anne Garnier.

The exact date of Marie Anne Garnier's entrance into the community of Beaune, in the Canton of Craponne, is not known. Before the Revolution, the convents of the Institute of Saint Joseph were independent of one another. When a new establishment opened, in order to give it legal existence the members drew up a contract in the presence of the notary. The property acquired, or to be acquired, as well as the products of their works, were held in common.

When the Revolution enforced the laws of spoliation, the convents not provided with *letters patent,* thought of dissolving the association in order to have a home. This took place in Beaune. Through the ministry of M. Favier, notary in Craponne, the community was dissolved and the property was divided. As long as possible, the members continued to lead the common life and to practise their Rule. When, in the name of liberty, they were obliged to leave their convent and to separate, Marie Anne Garnier could be seen going and coming between Beaune and Lissac. Everybody called her "Sister," although she wore a secular dress.

Jeanne Marie Aubert, who was to die with her, was a member of the community of Saint Georges l' Agricol. This convent was more the object of malicious intrigues of the democratic municipality than the convent of Beaune.

When the intruder, imposed by the constitutional Bishop Delcher, took possession of the church, the lawful priest Julien Besset, his curate, Regis Rome, and the other priests, who had not taken the oath, celebrated Mass in the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The people deserted the church and crowded the chapel. The municipality was aroused. After driving the priests from their church, they wanted to drive them from the country. With this in view, they sent, to the public prosecutor, a long letter from which we shall quote a few paragraphs:

"Considering that the refractory priests (those who refused the oath) have established in the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Joseph a so-called religious cult, whose only aim is to win over the ignorant to a constant opposition to the law, we have thought it our duty to keep an eye on these former public officials,—Citizen Besset and his assistant, Citizen Rome. These priests have dissuaded the people from contracting marriage in the presence of our constitutional priest. Citizen Aubert, also a nonconformist priest, announced Mass in the parish and celebrated it in the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

"So that, positive of the deceit of Citizen Rome, we saw that his greatest means for fanning the flame of fanaticism, consisted in the sham religion which he had established in the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, in conjunction with Citizen Besset. Accordingly, wearing our badge of office, we went there to close it. We entered the church, where we found Citizen Rome, clothed in his alb, and we commanded him to leave with those present. Having done so, we closed the two outside doors of the church and placed on them the seals of the municipality."

The chapel was closed, but the faithful returned and Mass was celebrated in one of the rooms of the convent. This time, is was not the mayor nor the municipal counselors who came "wearing the badge of office" but the National Guard. Let us read some abstracts from the official report:

"The National Guard of Saint-Georges l'Agricol saw, for some time, the disorder which was propagated even in the tribunal of reconciliation with the God of peace. We came to the conclusion that weak and credulous young people were exposed to all dangers at every hour of the day, in the morning before daybreak and in the evening, when coming from a religious ceremony.

"We have been forced to band together to watch that no enemy of the public good come to take refuge in the parish. Upon being notified that one of these enemies had come to stay in the parish, in order that through the tribunal of penance, he might inculcate incendiary principles, we went, with *all the moderation which should guide every good citizen,* to the Sisters of Saint Joseph to ask if there were any suspicious strangers in the convent, and, in case of doubt, we made a search necessary to that effect not even omitting the home of Citizen Rome, the former assistant.

"Noticing that our wives, our children and our relatives, blinded by the aristocratic principles which they have imbibed, desert the parish church to go to the convent at the ringing of the bell, even at the time of devotions in the church, we have asked the Sisters of Saint Joseph *to give us the bell* which they use to call away the people of the parish."

One is not surprised to learn that the Sisters of Saint Georges l'Agricol, even before those of Beaune, had dissolved their community to which belonged Jeanne Marie Aubert and Antoinette Clavel, a sister of Father Clavel who was executed in Le Puy. Antoinette Clavel, with two of her companions, Benoîte Duchamp and Anne Ribeyron, were imprisoned in Craponne, as was also her sister, Marguerite Clavel. Jeanne Marie Aubert will be met again, since she was in the convoy mentioned above. The thirteen people, in the prison of Le Puy, came under the same accusation. Here are the facts:

Father Mourier, parish priest of Beaune and Father Chalaye, his curate, loyal to the Faith, had to emigrate. Furnished with passports on September 14, 1792, "after celebrating Mass and saying farewell to the people, they ostensibly went into exile." [4] Their intention was not to remain there. What would become of the flock without its pastor? There was great joy in Beaune, when this eminently Christian parish saw Father Mourier reappear. Each one offered his home as a refuge for a priest, who exposed himself to the worst dangers for the benefit of his people.

At once, the parish priest of Beaune placed himself at the service of the parish and of the neighboring parishes also. The Sisters of Saint Joseph designated the children for Baptism, the marriages to be blessed, the sick to be visited, while, at the same time, they gave all possible service to this untiring apostle.

Alas! no matter how great the zeal, no matter how great the love for souls, human strength has its limitations. This life of privation, sacrifice and watching, these nightly errands in all kinds of weather, over all kinds of roads and through all kinds of danger undermined the health of Father Mourier. During the week of Pentecost, June, 1794, he became seriously ill in the home of a certain Best, in the village of Bruac, in the parish of Beaune.

This thoroughly Christian family received him kindly and Sister Garnier became his nurse. The priest, knowing that he

[4] M. l'Abbé Regis Pontvianne: *La ville et le canton de Craponne.*

would be confined to his bed for several days, feared to expose these good people to the anger of the Revolutionists. He begged them to take him to a shepherd's hut which he knew well, having used it many times. The refusal was explicit.

One day, towards evening, as he was feeling very ill, he asked for Father Chalaye, who was in the village of Poyet. Joseph Prohet went at once and brought back the priest. Soon the news of the presence of the sick priest was spread abroad. Everybody in the neighborhood became uneasy, and, without any deliberation, people came from all directions to help the family and assist the patient. When Father Chalaye arrived, he found the place filled with people. He saw the sick priest, heard his confession and administered the Last Sacraments. Hardly had he finished the duties of his sacred ministry, when the door opened as if by the wind. A kind voice said: "A detachment of the National Guard is not far from the house."

Without losing a second, Barthelémy Best carried Father Mourier to a room where he would be in safety. With admirable presence of mind, Best's wife undressed one of her children, threw him into the unmade bed and buried him under the covers. Father Chalaye and Sister Garnier escaped through a secret door. Who gave the signal to the police? A youth fourteen or fifteen years old, a servant at Saint-André de Chalancon. He had come to visit his parents. He learned of the presence of the priest in Best's home. On returning to Saint-André, without thinking of doing any evil, he spoke about it within the hearing of his employer who denounced the priest.

At once the patriots rushed upon the Best home, guarding all roads to it, while some entered the house. The kitchen, the bedrooms, the attic, the furniture, were searched and ransacked. The soldiers went to the barn, plunged their swords and bayonets into the fodder, turning it over and over again. There was no priest! They went to the homes of the neighbors and, just as fruitlessly, began the search. They questioned, they promised, they threatened. Their energy was wasted. In a paroxysm of fury they formed ranks again and marched to Craponne.

The members of the family uttered a sigh of relief. All believed themselves saved, Father Mourier as well as the others. The suffering that he had borne so silently till then wrung from him now a cry of pain. A soldier more crafty or more wicked than the others was hidden in the barn. He heard the cry and, leaving in haste, called his companions, to return to the search.

"I am sure he is there," he said. "Rather than give up finding him, I would set fire to the house."

The search began again, more rabid than ever. One of the soldiers going toward Claude Best, a child eleven years old who was in the priest's bed, cried furiously to him:

"Tell us where this priest is. We know he is here. Your father told us."

"I do not know," the child answered. "If my father told you, ask him again."

"You must tell us," another continued.

Placing the child's head on the edge of the bed, he put the sword on his neck saying: "We will cut off your head, if you do not tell us."

"I do not know anything about it," the child replied through his sobs.

Stationed almost at the place where the cry was heard, the patriots drove their swords everywhere and succeeded in wounding the priest's shoulder. An eye-witness testified to having seen this wound at the time the priest mounted the scaffold. Father Mourier was forced to surrender. They dragged him from his hiding place and loaded him with chains. It was toward midnight of the eve of Trinity or perhaps early in the morning of Trinity Sunday.

The Best family and all those who were in the house were arrested and put in chains at the same time. The soldiers were obliged to take the yokes from the animals to bind some of the prisoners, as the patriots, not expecting such a capture, were not sufficiently provided with chains.

Of all those who were gathered together a few hours before, some still remained free. They were Father Chalaye, Sister Garnier, who had escaped and the three Best children: Claude, eleven; Ann Marie, nine and Elizabeth, seven. The soldiers had neglected to put these children in chains. Before his escape, Father Chalaye had hidden the Blessed Sacrament in a safe place. We note this because these consecrated Hosts were mentioned at the trial. These Hosts may have been desecrated by the soldiers. We know nothing further about them.

With the prisoners bound, and beyond possibility of escape, the patriots spent the rest of the night eating and drinking. At daybreak, they left the house without bothering about the three children who were alone. The prisoners were put under the care of five brigades of armed police and the convoy went to Le Puy.

The sixteenth of June was taken up with the journey and the drawing up of the report for the register in the jail. The next morning, Sister Garnier who had escaped the evening before, joined the captives. There are two versions of her imprisonment. One relates that having wandered a great part of the night, she gave herself up to the police of Chomelix. This report is too doubtful to be believed. The other version says that after the departure of the convoy, frightened and distracted from what she had seen and heard, she walked at random, not knowing which road to take. In her distress, she fell near a footpath in the middle of a field of broom sedge. A man whose two daughters had been her pupils passed and recognized her. He questioned her:

"Is it you, Sister? What are you doing here?"

"I am hiding. Say nothing about it."

"Be calm, stay here. I shall come back for you."

The wretch did not return, but he notified the police who arrested Sister Garnier in Chomelix and took her to Le Puy. Hardly had the formality of imprisonment been fulfilled, when the Sister was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal to be questioned with Father Mourier and his companions. The priest took the stand first. It must be remarked, however, that during the morning of June 17, the judges found time to question the thirteen prisoners, to deliberate, to draw up the writ of condemnation and to execute it on the same day.

Six were condemned to death: Father Mourier, Barthelémy Best, his wife, his sister and the two Sisters of Saint Joseph. Marguerite, the daughter, was fourteen years old, but she was so little that she seemed eleven. She was in the convoy, but the judge dared not condemn a child. The acquitted child was compelled to walk around the guillotine twice as her parents' heads fell. This experience so deeply affected her that she died three months later.

On the evening of that day, on La Place du Marthouret, the six were executed, and a few days later posters told the recluses of Montfranc that two of their Sisters had gone to increase the phalanx of virgin martyrs in Heaven. However great this glory, it did not keep their hearts from feeling the wounds. That of Mother Saint John bled often,—it was so tender, so good; but her ardent faith, coming to the aid of her sorrow, gave courage to herself and to the others. All, united in fervent prayer, cast themselves into God's arms and prepared with confidence and love for whatever might come.

Once, out of prison, the venerable Mother made, in the form of a litany, a list of the martyred priests of her acquaintance. We find in her notebook the names of twenty-one priests either guillotined or shot. Father Clavel is one and Father Mourier follows next. Mother Saint John, without wishing to anticipate the judgment of the Church, took pleasure in invoking them in the hours of distress. We seem to hear her cry mounting to Heaven:

"Saint Clavel, pray for me!"
"Saint Mourier, pray for me!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS

AT Montfranc the days were long, dull and gloomy. No religious help penetrated there. Faith alone sustained the Sisters' courage. It was a time of greatest terror. Monastic vows had been suppressed to make men free, and, since then, decrees, laws, oaths, banishments, denunciations, executions, shootings, judicial drownings and things all unheard of, fell like a cascade one upon the other. The honest and reasonable citizens who had saluted, with sincere enthusiasm, the radiant dawn then rising over France, looked on amazed and bewildered. The priest, faithful to his duty, had become the greatest of criminals; and he who received a priest or rendered him any service, was as great a criminal as the priest. The priests, not wishing to compromise others, went higher into the mountains, burying themselves deeper in the forests, and withdrawing farther from our recluses.

God knew that in the shadow of the prison of Montfranc, souls had need of sunlight. He sent it. One morning, two new captives entered the prison. One of them, Sister Alexis Payrard, was a novice from Saint Hilaire. At Saint Hilaire, on the borders of the Departments of the Loire and Haute-Loire, there was a community of Sisters of Saint Joseph, and before the unbridling of the tempest, the Sisters of Bas and Saint Hilaire had paid friendly visits, as the convents were not far apart. Meeting now in prison, they saluted and embraced one another, but, with a finger on her lips, Sister Alexis imposed silence.

"I carry the good God," she said when the jailer disappeared. A tremor of joy went through the entire group and each look was a question. They did not wait long for an explanation. The community of Saint Hilaire had been subjected to the same fate as the others. Since she was a novice, Sister

Alexis was obliged, among the first, to leave her home and take refuge in Tiranges, in the Canton of Bas, with one of her aunts.

This aunt, the other captive, who was an excellent Christian gave hospitality to proscribed priests. The night before, one of them had just finished a nocturnal Mass, so ardently desired by true Catholics, when a night-patrol invaded the house. The priest was no longer there, but the consecrated Hosts were still in the house, enclosed in a small box. To save them from desecration, Sister Alexis seized the box and hid it in her pocket while her aunt parleyed with the leader of the patrol. The soldiers ransacked the house and looked everywhere without finding a priest. The aunt and the niece were suspected and were taken to Montfranc.

When Sister Alexis had finished speaking, Mother Saint John and the Sisters knelt and kissed respectfully the dress which served as a tabernacle for their Eucharistic God. The prison was transformed. Adorations succeeded one another and every one thanked God who had willed to visit them. The little cenacle preserved its Treasure until a priest could be informed of the fact. "Let them communicate with these Hosts," he said to the ambassadress. One can imagine the preparation, the emotion and the touching sight of Mother Saint John distributing the Bread of Angels to her companions, and receiving It herself.

During that time other Sisters of Saint Joseph became witnesses of Christ. At Saint Julien Vocance in Vivarais, Ardèche, the Sisters were obliged to leave their convent. One Religious alone was authorized to remain in the house, perhaps as a tenant. This case presented itself many times. Sister Arzailler was engaged in teaching the priest's niece. Further away, but still in the parish, lived another Sister of Saint Joseph, Sister Géry. The other members of the community lived outside the district with their relatives.

Father d'Allemand, parish priest of Saint Julien Vocance, was a descendant of Chevalier Bayard and a worthy priest. "When seeing him in their little church, kneeling in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and plunged in a contemplation that nothing could disturb, the faithful soon justly appraised the saintly priest. He spent himself in instructing the children, in consoling the afflicted, in converting sinners and preparing the sick for death. When once they knew him, they felt they had loved him for many years."

Father d'Allemand made friends with two of the chanters in his church, Claude Sauze and Baptiste Rival. Neither was worthy of this friendship. When the Reign of Terror began its horrible work, Father d'Allemand, who was well loved in his parish, was not uneasy. The day after Christmas, 1793, he was driven from his church and rectory. No longer in possession of a home, he took refuge in the convent with his niece. Sister Arzailler received the priest as a Sister should. She surrounded him with care and took so many precautions, that he could have lived there peacefully for some time. Every morning, before daybreak, he celebrated Mass at an altar which the community still preserves as a relic. At night he visited the sick and dying. The convent was suspected, but every time that a search was to take place, somebody learned of it and the Sister prevented his capture. The priest would fly at once to the woods, and the revolutionary emissaries would find no one.

One day, Sauze arrived without any warning, accompanied by a detachment of the National Guard. There was a hidden retreat near the cellar. Sister Arzailler had just time to get the priest there and to place a board in front of it but this board was too narrow to hide the opening completely.

Sauze entered the house and said: "Citizen d'Allemand is here. We know it."

"You know it!" answered the Sister. "Well, then, take the trouble to look for him," and pointing to the stairs, she accompanied them to the upper floor, followed them everywhere and allowed them to search in all the corners, in the beds and in the cupboards. They found no one. Having returned to the ground floor, Sauze turned his eyes toward the entrance to the cellar where the priest was. Sister Arzailler noticed it.

"Ah! you want to search in there, citizen! I will not prevent you. You may ransack there as in other places."

Then, taking him by the shoulder, she pushed him through the opening. The priest considered himself lost. But, Sauze, fortunately deemed it an ambuscade and, throwing her backward, withdrew from the cellar, threatening her. He and his assistants searched the ground floor without returning to the hidden retreat. For this time, the priest was saved but he had to change his place of shelter.

Not far from Sauze's house lived Faurie de la Celle, a good Catholic who was not afraid to compromise himself. The proscribed priest went for protection to his house. At that unhappy time, every Christian home had hiding places to shelter the priests. There was one at Faurie's for Father d'Allemand. A young, devout and intelligent servant secretly brought him food and information. She advised him to distrust Sauze. His heart filled with kindness, Father d'Allemand could not believe that Sauze was wicked as they said. He saw him, indeed, through the chinks of the hiding place, going and coming in Faurie's yard without any apparent motive. Sauze surely suspected the house. Acting prudently, the priest did not go out; but to himself, he said: "If I saw him, if I spoke to him, he would change his sentiments. Why would he want to hurt me?" Sauze did not deserve the opinion the priest had of him. The following dialogue was overheard one day:

"I tell you he is hidden in Faurie de la Celle's house. Make an official search and you will find him."

"How can you say he is there?" Sauze answered, "I go there every moment and I never meet him."

This conversation was repeated to the priest; therefore, he decided to leave this place where he was no longer in safety. Chartepie's home was opened to him. He went there, but as soon as he knew the law of April 11, 1794, he wished neither to remain nor to accept hospitality from anyone.

This law, which had just been posted at Annonay, condemned to death all priests found on French territory, and all those who sheltered them or who showed in any way that they were in favor of their ministry. Henceforth, Father d'Allemand sought refuge in the forests, particularly in that of Mathe where he had the consolation of meeting other priests who also sought safety there. One of the priests was Father Montblanc, parish priest of Bans, an annex of Givors (Rhone). He will be heard of later.

After escaping, as if by a miracle, a death which dogged his footsteps, Father Montblanc was, with his brother-priests, on the high mountains of Ardèche from which each one, whenever possible, went to the cities and villages to exercise his ministry. This apostolic duty fulfilled, all met together to speak, in tears, of God, of their parishes and of France. The joy caused by these reports of brotherly and supernatural affection made them partly forget their sufferings and helped them to bear the privations inseparable from their life of uncertainty, among which we must place hunger, a torment often and harshly experienced.

The municipality of Saint Julien had resolved that the armed force of the commune be used to search everywhere to discover Father d'Allemand and all those who had given him shelter. It also issued a warrant for his arrest. A copy of the resolution was sent to Annonay and the warrant arrived almost immediately, requiring the district of Mézenc to lend a strong hand in executing the order. It ordained, besides, that at the suit of the national commissary seals be affixed at once to the furniture, goods and papers of Citizen d'Allemand by the justice of the peace of the Canton of Annonay.

Father d'Allemand had not waited till then to remove his furniture. Judging it useless in his empty house, he had disposed of it in various places. When on May 8, Sauze took the justice of the peace to the rectory, nothing was there. Since this furniture now belonged to the nation, it must be found.

Thinking of the two Sisters of Saint Joseph whom he suspected of having received the priest, Sauze communicated his suspicions to the judge. He took him first to Catherine Géry's home and recognized at once Father d'Allemand's writing-table. The latter, needing money, borrowed some from the

Sister and left this desk in exchange for the money he had not returned. The judge made a note of his discovery. From there, Sauze took him to the home of Sister Arzailler. Sister Arzailler was brave, but, as she hardly expected to be questioned about furniture, she hesitated a moment but only long enough to gain control of herself, then answered:

"I do not know of any, unless the chest of drawers used by the priest's niece."

The justice wanted to see this chest and without any examination or further questioning affixed the seals. Three days later, the Tribunal of Annonay sent Bailiff Chazallet for a new investigation. The latter went further than the judge. Opening a drawer which was not locked, he found a box with the label *reinages.*

The *reinages* was an old custom of the Middle Ages, preserved in certain countries. The solemnity of Saint Roch gave rise to a feast partly religious and partly secular. The young men and young women went in pairs to the church to be blessed. These were generally betrothed couples who were putting their future homes under God's protection. During the course of the ceremony a king and queen were chosen and the king formed his court. This joyful court paid its royalty and different taxes by gifts more or less generous, which had to be used in the purchase of wax for the lighting of the church. This was the money found in the drawer. Father d'Allemand did not take it with him because it belonged to the church.

The chest contained two books, four screens and a priest's cincture. A closet belonging to Sister Arzailler was opened also. The bailiff found therein two books, a history and a prayerbook. All these objects were confiscated as property of the Republic.

When they asked: "Where is the priest?" she answered this time, without hesitation and truthfully, that she did not know. Nevertheless, the objects discovered proved in an evident manner that she had hidden the refractory priest. She was arrested and imprisoned in Annonay.

At the time of the search in Sister Géry's home, the bailiff found in the desk a small roll of cloth, pictures, kitchen utensils and crockery. The authorities could not let the one who had received these objects live peaceably in her home. Five days after Sister Arzailler's imprisonment, Sister Géry joined her. The Sisters had to submit to many questions before the Tribunal of Annonay. Sister Arzailler was accused of the following offenses:

> "1. For not satisfying the law which subjects former Sisters to the civic oath.
> "2. For giving shelter to the aforesaid priest, d'Allemand, in order to withdraw him from the penalties incurred by him.
> "3. For having received goods belonging to him, in defiance of the interests of the Republic."

Sister Arzailler declared that she never took the oath; that it was never demanded of her; that she had not seen Father d'Allemand since the day after Christmas, when the church was closed and he had disappeared; that his sister, Cécile d'Allemand, lived for a few days in the convent after the departure of the priest, after which, she also left; that his niece, Cécile Billard, was still in the home of the former Sisters, and that Cécile d'Allemand and Cécile Billard were as ignorant as she as to what had become of the parish priest of Saint Julien. She said that the parents of Cécile Billard had sent her a chest of drawers for the storing of her little property. She had a key to it, and used it exclusively. It was just the same in regard to the mirror. Cécile Billard had brought the two books unknown to her. She also stated that she could not be held responsible for the *reinages*.

Sister Géry's examination gave about the same results. Instead of furniture, she could show a note of December 31, stating that Father d'Allemand, who, at that time, was not under suspicion, had borrowed from her the sum of one hundred pounds, and as a surety for this sum had given the desk as a pledge.

By order of the national commissary, the same justice of the peace who had attended to affixing the seals had to remove them. The two compromising pieces of furniture with their contents were confiscated, including, of course, the box containing the *reinages* which amounted to twenty five pounds, fifteen cents and nine deniers (three quarters of a cent).

While the court was trying the two Sisters, their friends in Saint Julien were not inactive. The Sisters had done a great deal of good in the parish; they were still doing it. The idea now was to show that the people remembered. Some Catholics, who were not afraid, obtained from the General Council a certificate attesting "that these Sisters were born in the commune and had always conducted themselves in an edifying manner worthy of praise, and above all, in helping suffering humanity."

This certificate sent to the tribunal, so pleaded in their favor that the director of the jury stopped proceedings, saying that they did not have sufficient motives for keeping them in custody; and on May 25, 1794, Sisters Arzailler and Géry, having been given their liberty, returned to their homes.

The day of Sister Arzailler's arrest, Sauze had taken the bailiff into all the houses of Saint Julien capable of giving shelter to the one they sought. All were closely examined. Not finding the priest, they decided that he must have left France and they put his name on the list of émigrés.

Father d'Allemand had not left France. He contented himself with prudently going a little distance from his parish. It was, however, for only a very short time. Soon his apostolic heart brought him back to the heights overlooking Saint Julien and from there the dauntless shepherd resumed guard over the flock which God had given to his care. "Whether in the woods or elsewhere he received all those of his parishioners who had asked his services. His zeal was so great, his self-sacrifice so complete, that, when seeing him at work in the depth of the forest, one could believe that he had chosen this perilous life in preference to all others."[1]

He had not chosen it, but since it was necessary for the good of souls, he accepted it uncomplainingly. Yet this life, itself, filled with sacrifice and danger, could not last long for Sauze and his kind had eyes and ears on the watch. They soon perceived passages and unusual paths and notified Bruyère, national agent for the Directory, who immediately warned all the neighboring municipalities that they must take the promptest measures for securing the enemies of the Revolution, telling them that their peace depended upon the execution of the law for the arrest of refractory priests and suspected persons.

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[1] M. Chaussinand.

At the same time, Bruyère wrote to the National Commissioner sending him a copy of the letter sent to the municipalities. "You will see that I recommend to them all measures of public safety to succeed in discovering the retreat of the malicious persons." [2]

Everybody was perplexed. They had looked so carefully, where could they still search? Sauze gave vent to his bad temper as a result of so much useless toil. Rival complained of the cold nights spent in the woods to surprise the unfindable. Desmartin saw difficulties against which they should have been warned.

The assembly was filled with dejection. One of its members, Antoine Mouttet, said sarcastically: "It is not so difficult as you suppose to discover and to arrest Citizen d'Allemand. Give me but a few days." The wretch had planned a diabolical trick that was to succeed.

On July 5, Antoine Mouttet's wife gave birth to a daughter. Father d'Allemand was asked to baptize the infant. Without any suspicion, the priest left the forest about eleven o'clock at night. He had to cross the Cance to reach the traitor's house. Sauze, who was waiting on the other side, seized the priest, when he appeared. Father d'Allemand was armed; he could have defended himself. The fear of throwing his assailant into the hands of Divine Justice stopped him. He allowed himself to be taken. Sauze led him to Rival's house where he spent the remainder of the night. The next day they took him to the rectory and confined him in his own living-room. A few hours

[2] M. Chaussinand.

later, Sauze dragged him from it to take him to the Tribunal of Annonay where he was tried and condemned.

Early in the morning of July 8, 1794, the guards arrived and took Father d'Allemand from the prison of Annonay to put him into the wagon of the condemned, which was to take him to Privas where he arrived the next day. The jailer put him into a damp, dark dungeon in which there were three other priests. One of them was Father Montblanc who had already suffered with him in the woods of Mathe. Three Sisters of Saint Joseph had entered the prison at the same time as Father Montblanc. One can guess their crime. They had received the priest, who for some time had found shelter with his brother, a doctor, in Condrieu, where he disguised himself as a physician. He could thus easily enter the homes of the sick to help them. This expedient did not continue long. At the end of five months, he had to leave his brother and retire to the mountains. It was at Pelussin, at the foot of Mont Pilatus, that he was arrested in May, 1793, when he came one day to administer the Last Sacraments to a dying man. He was awaiting sentence in a prison in Lyons, in the dungeons of Pierre Scize. The city of Lyons having risen in revolt in an endeavor to put an end, by force of arms, to the atrocities of the Revolutionary Tribunal, the soldiers of General Précy thought first of the prisoners and opened the dungeons of Pierre Scize. Father Montblanc was thus freed on September 4, 1793.

His zeal led him down to Annonay. An aged sacristan, Joseph Gauthier, gave him lodging. He posed as a doctor and every one in the house called him by his Christian name, Uncle Barthelémy. His supposed profession made it easy to visit the sick, and permitted him to exercise his ministry for the faithful who came to consult him at Marie Louise Tracol's home. Father Montblanc's countenance reflected so great sanctity that he was suspected by some of the radicals; and they laid snares for him, which he fortunately frustrated. He decided to leave Annonay.

Close by, in Vernosc, there was a modest community of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The Sisters had not been driven out because the town was still Christian. The community consisted, as far as the records show, of one novice and three professed Sisters. The Superior was Sister Sainte Croix, a native of Burdignes, Loire. She was a simple, upright soul who never complained and who, through her intelligence, courage, and virtue brought all things to a happy end. Her companions followed in her footsteps. Like their Mother, they carried in their hearts love of God and their neighbor and, everywhere they went, brought help and comfort. They were loved by the people who had recourse to them in their difficulties.

One night, a knock was heard at the door of the convent. A knock, at that time, was no ordinary thing. Somebody was surely in danger. To the Sisters' question, a voice answered: "A fugitive priest!" They understood, the door opened wide and the priest was received as one sent from Heaven. An altar was improvised and the next day, at dawn, the Holy Sacrifice was offered and the priest became the director of their virgin souls. Father Montblanc would have been able to spend the rest of the Reign of Terror there, but his zeal was greater than his prudence. Without thinking of the danger, he resumed his apostolic duties in Vernosc and the surrounding towns.

No matter how fair a country is, there is always a wolf hidden in some den. There was a she-wolf in Vernosc, a woman to whom God had given many graces, which she abused. This she-wolf, a former Religious, drew many young wolves to her lair. "I would wager," she said, "that this man is a priest. He has the appearance of a monk rather than that of a *sans culotte*."

The wolves, their appetite whetted, lay in wait for their prey. On June 9, 1794, the priest left the convent after celebrating Mass. The "wolves" were there. They cast such threatening looks at him that he foresaw the danger. To escape, he changed his direction and plunged into the bushes which border the Cance. When this became known, he was pursued and caught, and was given over to the municipality which notified the Tribunal of Annonay.

The next day, the Sisters heard the clash of arms at their door. They had given shelter to the priest. They were to die as well as he. The National Guard found in the house Sister Sainte Croix Vincent, aged sixty-three; Sister Madeleine Sénovert and Sister Toussaint Dumoulin who was only thirty-one. Perhaps the novice and the other Sisters had succeeded in escaping. At once Mother Sainte Croix and Sister Madeleine foresaw martyrdom. Happy and proud to immolate for God the lives they had consecrated to Him, they allowed themselves to be put in chains without the least resistance. It was not the same with Sister Toussaint. She was young. She had done no harm. She was anxious to live and did not admit the right of these brutes to take her life. She resisted with all her strength but this strength could not hold out. Chained like her companions, she was brutally dragged from the convent.

Sister Toussaint casting a last look at the house she had left, breathed a deep sigh. The young novice was there. Breaking through the crowd, she rushed toward Sister Toussaint saying: "Sister, give me your place. I will die willingly for you."

"Who is that woman?" the guards asked.

"She is the Sisters' servant," replied somebody, who feared for her.

The soldiers roughly pushed her aside and urged the victims to advance.

At Annonay, when it was proved by evidence that Father Montblanc was a priest, the revolutionary committee sent a brigade to arrest Marie Louise Tracol because she had given refuge to a refractory priest. The search made in her home revealed church vestments, and the servant was arrested as she was taking an alb and a cincture to a neighbor's house. The two women were taken, in chains, to the same prison as the Sisters. In order not to let the accused consult together, the examination was started at once. One of the judges even set a snare for the Superior.

"The priest, whom you received in your house, has just declared in his examination that he celebrated Mass there several days in succession."

Straightforward as she was, Sister Sainte Croix had not the least inkling of suspicion and the thought of dissembling was farthest from her. She answered that Father Montblanc celebrated Mass every day while he was in the convent and that she and the Sisters had assisted at it.

Now, to the question which they put to Father Montblanc: "Did you not celebrate Mass on the twenty-first of the month and the days preceding in the house of the Sisters of Saint Joseph?" he answered: "I celebrated Mass when I was able, but state neither the place nor the day in order not to compromise anybody." And to the other question: "Where did you get the necessary vestments?" he said: "I have none of my own, but wherever I said Mass, the people of the house tried to get them for me."

"Did you celebrate Mass often? Did you hear confessions and give Holy Communion?"

"I followed the dictates of my conscience and the precepts of religion in fulfilling these different duties, but I always exhorted those who appealed to me, to have an entire submission to the laws of the state. I understand by civil laws those which have a bearing on the civil administration and not those contrary to religion. With regard to the latter, I have told the faithful that it is worth more to obey God than men."

"What are those civil laws which, in your opinion, are contrary to those of God?"

"They are those which injure the jurisdiction of the Pope and the bishops of the Catholic Church."

Transferred from Annonay to Privas, Father Montblanc, the Sisters, Marie Tracol and the servant appeared seven days later before the tribunal of the Department which resumed the examination. The judgment was pronounced on July 8, 1794, at ten o'clock in the morning, in the pretorium of the criminal court of the Department of Ardèche, sitting at Privas. The court ordained that the prisoners be given over to the executor of criminal judgments and within twenty-four hours to be put to death on the small square of the commune.

As Marie Louise Tracol and her servant had sheltered the priest before October 20 and 21, they were not condemned to death but to imprisonment with loss of civil rights. The servant died as a result of her imprisonment. The execution of the priest and the three Sisters did not take place until later. On the morning of their condemnation July 9, 1794, somebody opened the door of Father d'Allemand's prison and the priest had the surprise and happiness of meeting three valiant defenders of the Faith, one of whom he knew. The other two, Father Bac, parish priest of Mens, a district of Grenoble, and Father Jean Louis Gardès, prior of Ceyrac, in the Diocese of Nimes, had also heard their sentence. Like them, Father d'Allemand was questioned and condemned to die within twenty-four hours. Like them, he too, had been left to languish in the prison.

Father Rouville of the Society of Jesus was made their cellmate on July 14, 1794. In the report of the cross-examination of the day before at Aubenas, the Jesuit was ranked as "a former priest." At these words Father Rouville stood up and interrupting the reading, said with noble indignation: "I am a priest. I will always be a priest."

All those who were to be executed within twenty-four hours had, in reality, to wait several weeks. Mother Sainte Croix and Sister Madeleine lived there in an atmosphere of peace and courage. This delay was an agony for Sister Toussaint. Sensitive by nature, she had the guillotine ever before her eyes. She was willing to give her life to God to save others, but she did not recognize the right of these men to take it. Sister Toussaint wanted to live because she had the right to live. Aided by the help of faith, her soul accepted the ordeal, but the end was too long in coming, the sacrifice was being renewed; the will gave itself, but nature revolted. It was a struggle. It was the martyrdom of the senses preparing for the martyrdom of blood. To mankind, such a struggle does not perhaps seem very glorious; but who knows what it is to God?

The Catholics of Privas and even the Protestants would have liked to save these innocent victims and furnish them means of escape. The judges themselves tried to find a motive to delay the death penalty, in the secret hope of being able to cancel it, but Marcon, the public prosecutor was adamant. However, at this time, things were not going well with him. For reasons that we have not tried to find out, he whom the terrorist Gouthon called "The inestimable Marcon," was put into prison at Le Puy on the very day that one of the priests, Father Bac, met the same fate in Privas. Marcon had to be replaced temporarily in the criminal court of Ardèche by a judge named Vincent.

This Vincent, a former pupil of Father Rouville, in the college of Aubenas, could condemn, but he had not the courage to carry out the execution. Hence the delay. Marcon should have left his head in Le Puy, but some people were anxious for his services. His friends were powerful enough to get him out of the clutches of justice.

At length, one of the judges, followed by a recorder, came to announce the sentence. The execution would take place the next day. The three Sisters went to confession for the last time. Their night was spent in prayer. Even Sister Toussaint was calm. Unfortunately the brutal executioner, on entering the cell in the morning, endeavored to embrace those whose hands he tied. At this, Sister Toussaint felt all her indignation aroused again. To escape the butcher's kiss, she ran around the table several times. She was compelled to let herself be taken and put in chains. In her sorrow, she remembered the martyrs who were so kind towards their persecutors and her Divine Saviour who allowed Himself to be led to the holocaust, as a lamb to the slaughter. These examples calmed her soul, which was ever ready to rise in revolt.

The distance from the prison to the guillotine was not far but, contrary to what usually happened, the road was deserted. The inhabitants of Privas saw, with horror, so many crimes perpetrated that they shut themselves in their homes. However, when the priests left their dungeons chanting the psalm, "Miserere," the doors opened and the crowd increased little by little. Sympathy shone on all countenances and the emotion was deep on hearing these generous victims call to Heaven with all the ardor of their souls at each verse: "Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo. Spare, O Lord, spare thy people." Emotion was deeper still when they saw them one after the other mount the steps of the guillotine without stopping their chants and prayers.

The three Sisters led this imposing cortège. They were the first to redden the guillotine with their blood. Mother Sainte Croix and Sister Madeleine mounted calm and recollected. They advanced with a perfect serenity of soul and placed themselves under the knife without interrupting their prayer. Sister Toussaint followed them but the struggle was too great; the emotion, too deep. Her strength was exhausted. On seeing the Sisters' heads fall, she fainted. While in this condition, she was guillotined.

CHAPTER IX

A LOST PALM

AFTER each one of the unjust executions in which the family of Saint Joseph had its share of sorrow and glory, the press, with the help of placards, increased horror and panic among the people. It printed five hundred, six hundred, one thousand lists. It posted these placards on the walls of the canton and outside of the canton, as if to say to everybody, "Beware!" These posters filled those who read them with a horror that increased daily throughout all France. Fear, itself, augmented danger; and, too often, the innocent became victim because of its fatal effects. The tiger, daring everything, left no act of cruelty untried.

Although calm and abandoned to God's will, the angelic group in the prison of Montfranc felt their souls plunged into sadness. They, too, awaited martyrdom, and were preparing themselves in the midst of privations and sufferings. They were grieved, not so much for their own misfortunes as for those of France and the Church. Mother Saint John was neither frightened nor saddened at the thought of leaving this earth, and her example inflamed the Sisters with supernatural courage. These words of Tertullian could have been applied to them: "The martyrs live in a gloomy dungeon, but they themselves are a light. Chains bind them, but they are free before God. They breathe an infected atmosphere, but shed around them a perfume of exquisite sweetness."

The greatest suffering of the little family of Saint Joseph was the deprivation of religious assistance. The Sisters had been in prison for several months without any notice as to the term of their imprisonment. One day the jailer said brutally to Mother Saint John: "Citizeness, it is your turn tomorrow." "Thanks be to God!" answered the noble Mother, trembling with joy.

The jailer had addressed Mother Saint John only, but her daughters thought that their fate would not be different from that of their Mother. All prepared to climb the steps of the guillotine. "Tomorrow," said the prisoners among themselves, "will be the most beautiful day in our lives, we must get our garments ready." The little community still possessed a small amount of money. The Sisters decided unanimously that it should be spent in the preparing of their modest clothing for the great festival of the morrow. These resolutions taken, they all waited in prayer, picturing the Heaven which was about to open for them.

We should note, however, that our prisoners could not be guillotined the next day, for no executions had taken place in Saint Didier. We have seen them in Craponne, Beaune and Vernosc because condemnation was the affair of the criminal court, which held its sessions in the chief town of the Department. "Tomorrow your turn" meant "tomorrow the departure for the court without appeal, in Le Puy, and the day after that, the execution." The law stated that condemned persons had to be put to death within twenty-four hours. Special circumstances were necessary for the delay in Privas.

"Thus prepared, with their lamps lighted by faith and love, these wise virgins joyfully awaited the coming of the Bridegroom and their admission to the nuptial feast of the Lamb."

Yet, Heaven did not open. Mother Saint John's work was not finished. In order that she might accomplish her task, Divine Providence gave an unexpected turn to events. Those whom Robespierre desired to send to the guillotine, sent him there and, let it be said in passing, the tyrant did not go gracefully. His death did not end the Revolution. There were still many sad days after his death, but the disappearance of this creature of blood permitted people to breathe again. At any rate, many prisoners indirectly owed their freedom to him. Mother Saint John and her companions were among the number. When their dungeon opened on July 27, all stood ready to go forth to death.

God willed otherwise. Instead of having chains put on their hands, they were told that they were free. "At this news which brought so much joy to the others," Canon Rivaux tells us that Mother Saint John cried out sorrowfully: "Ah, my Sisters, we are not worthy of the grace to die for our holy religion. Our sins have been an obstacle to this great favor." The saintly Mother, during the remainder of her life, regretted having lost the palm of martyrdom, which had escaped her at the moment she believed herself about to hold it.

When in later years, people spoke to her of this heroic epoch of her life and of what she had suffered in prison, she adroitly turned the conversation to speak of those Sisters who had not been spared and of their glorious martyrdom. For her, all suffering was as nothing because she had not received the crown of martyrdom.

On their release from prison, Mother Saint John and Sister Saint Teresa met their brother, Claude Fontbonne. On learning the news of the approaching execution of his dear Sisters, he had hastened to the prison to say a last goodby, to recommend himself to their prayers and to receive their blessing. As devoted a son as he was a good brother, he had used every means possible to comfort, encourage and console his old father and to prevent him from accompanying him on such a journey. He rightly feared the effects of so great a sorrow on one in his old age.

His own grief had reached its height and each instant he was about to succumb. When he arrived at Saint Didier and saw them saved and free, the sudden transition from deep grief to extreme joy gave such a shock to his heart that he fell senseless to the ground. This deep emotion was followed by a violent fever and illness during which Mother Saint John never left his bedside. By her care and prayers, she had the consolation of restoring him, in health, to his family.

In 1793, the two Fontbonnes and other Religious had asked from the municipality a certificate of residence and of patriotism which was indispensable unless they wished to be expatriated. Now they demanded a certificate of release which was just as necessary. Two other Religious from Bas presented themselves with Mother Saint John and Sister Saint Teresa. They were Angélique Girard and Françoise Favier de la Chomette, who had been imprisoned in Saint-Etienne, now called the Commune d'Armes since, under the Revolution, every allusion to saints had been forbidden. These four Religious appeared together before the municipality of Bas for the registering of their certificates. The deed is in the archives of Bas. It was written by Mathieu de Challes, secretary of the Town Hall. We shall quote a part of this document:

> "The citizenesses, Jeanne and Marie Fontbonne (ex-Josephines) of the above-mentioned convent of the Sisters of this community, originally of this commune of Bas, have requested the registration of their discharge from the prison of Montfranc."

What was the exact date of the Fontbonne sisters' release? We have not been able to decide that with any accuracy. Tradition places it immediately after the fall of Robespierre, that is to say the latter part of July, 1794, but the certificate is dated November 20, 1794. If we leave it at that date, the Sisters were given their liberty only four months after the tyrant's downfall. The certificate was not given on the day of their release from prison. The Sisters, no doubt, asked for it when they needed their quarterly pension, and this date, November 20, is probably not the date of release, but the day on which the certificate was issued.

The certificates of Angélique Girard and Françoise Favier de la Chomette, detained in Commune d'Armes, characterize them as stubborn fanatics who must be watched, lest they communicate their opinions to others. The formula is printed. The wording, with the exception of a change of name and date, is the same in all cases.

Was Mother Saint Francis liberated at the same time as her nieces? Evidently not. She, too, would need a certificate, and we should find this with those of Marie and Jeanne Fontbonne, if they had left the prison together. We have found none, therefore, we surmise that Mother Saint Francis obtained her liberty at some other time.

After the death of Robespierre, hope and confidence were reborn. The people who had kept the Faith demanded the right to practise it. The laws against refractory priests were, as yet, unrepealed. On February 21, 1795, the Convention, wishing to give proof of its moderation, passed a decree which authorized all religions to exercise private ministry. It no longer upheld the Civil Constitution of the clergy and no longer interfered with spiritual matters. A little later, it restored the churches. This tolerance, though incomplete, was received with transports of joy. It was a sign of mitigation.

Mother Saint Francis took advantage of it to try to reorganize her community. Addressing, in her own name and in the name of her daughters, a request to Citizen Pierret, at that time the representative of the people in Haute-Loire, she asked for the return of all the property of the convent. She was fortunate enough to recover it, since this property, having been used for the service of the nation, had not been sold. The Sisters of Bas could, then, though in secular dress, come together in their home, with their Superior in their midst, and begin again their works of charity and devotion to the poor, the sick and the children. Their work in the hospital was not resumed as funds were entirely wanting.

Since 1790, the Hôtel-Dieu of Lyons had stopped paying the annual income of fifteen hundred francs which it owed the hospital. This had been its chief source of income. The stocks in the legacy, previously noted, had been disposed of. The Sisters had to accept repayment made with paper money that was valueless. No longer having any resources, the Sisters were compelled to turn patients away. Since the nation was inclined to take possession of the little that remained in the establishment, the administrators forestalled the authorities and distributed the furniture to the poor who had been discharged from the hospital, and to the other needy people to whom the hospital had given service.

The buildings of the hospital which were vacant since 1793 were transformed in 1818 into a boys' school entrusted to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Bas had to wait until 1867 for the reopening of its hospital.

Mother Saint John also tried to reorganize her community of Monistrol and to regain possession of the property which depended on her dowry, her sister's and that of the dispersed Religious. Unfortunately, the convent had been sold and the buyer, an ardent Revolutionist, refused to give it back at any price. The Sisters were forced to renounce the hope of resuming their suspended works. The time was not propitious, so they had to wait. Monistrol suffered more from the revolutionary spirit than Bas. The intrepid, generous Sister had not abandoned the sick, though she was compelled to make many sacrifices and endure great suffering. The finances of the municipality were in desperate straits and its officials were still hostile to religion.

Finding it impossible to reinstate themselves in Monistrol, Mother Saint John and Sister Saint Teresa continued to live in their father's house. They shared in the self-sacrifice and apostolic labor to which Mother Saint Francis and her good Religious devoted themselves. Days passed thus, without the family having the least suspicion of the future marked out by God for the second daughter. While waiting, by uniting prayer to action, Mother Saint John, according to the spirit of her dear Institute, taught catechism to the children, visited the sick and assisted the dying.

The parents sorely felt the great need of having the two Sisters with them at the beginning of the year 1795. On January 25, their daughter, Catherine, married Nicholas Douplat, a rich silk merchant of Bas. Three months later, Nicholas was a widower. Such unforeseen hardships brought bitter sorrow and Mother Saint John was deeply crushed. Yet, conquering, or rather, supernaturalizing her grief, she was able to soften that of her father, her mother and the disconsolate husband.

She also had to console her brother, who lost his oldest son; and she shared his joy when God sent a little "Jacques" to replace him. The parents were so saddened by the departure of one child that they dared not rejoice at the arrival of the other. What if he, too, should be taken back to Heaven. A Franciscan priest, then living with Claude Fontbonne, said to the child's parents: "You will keep this child. Have him baptized at the altar of Saint Thyrsius. One day he will be a priest of Holy Mother Church and a zealous missionary."

Mother Saint John loved this boy as a child of her predilection. "When Divine Providence called her later to Saint-Etienne, she had the pleasure of having him near her and of seeing him grow up under her own eyes in innocence, piety and fear of the Lord. She later had the happiness of seeing him enter the Grand Seminary of Lyons, of assisting at his first Mass and of blessing his departure for the American missions."

It was in the same year that Jeanne Marie, Mother Saint John's goddaughter, married Jacques Teyssier, "a ribbon merchant of Saint-Etienne." Divine Providence was to bring together in the same village the godmother and goddaughter.

Mother Saint John breathed forth an odor of sanctity wherever she went. One of her nieces said: "I remember, while yet a child, my father often spoke to us about our aunt and her rare virtue. At these recitals, our hearts were deeply touched and filled with a desire to make her happy by our good conduct. Thoughts of her made us better, our prayers were said more fervently, our tasks were more readily accomplished and our obedience to our parents was more perfect."

Sometime later, God furnished a sweet consolation for His faithful servants. In 1798, they received a long letter filled with apostolic spirit from Bishop de Gallard. The venerable prelate in his exile did not forget his daughters. He wrote to console, to encourage and to direct them in the cruel trial they were undergoing.

"My dear daughters, you have many sacred claims to my sympathy and many glorious titles to merit them. Your virtues and my duties, your example and my desire for good, your tribulations and my sorrows, your hearts and mine, responsive to all tenderness, in every way assure you of my lively and constant solicitude for you.

"As the eyes of the Lord are always drawn to those who are faithful, and as the ears of His mercy are always open to their prayers, I dare to say also, that my thoughts turn unceasingly to you, and my soul in desolation continually hears your cry. I recall that you are the precious portion of my inheritance, ever dear to me and worthy of being so. You are always to me a chosen race, a holy people, the source of joy to Heaven. In tearing you from your homes of virtue, impiety could not rob God of His true sanctuaries, your hearts, consecrated to Him by virginity.

"So far the enemy of all good and all virtue has made futile efforts to shake your courage. Worthy spouses of Jesus Christ, like Mary, you have remained standing at the foot of the Cross, and you have not refused the chalice of opprobrium and sorrow which Jesus has offered to you. Oh, my dear daughters, rejoice and be glad in the Lord for all the trials which Heaven willed you to have, in conformity with your Divine Spouse and for the triumph with which He has crowned your invincible firmness.

"Jealous of your glory, dismayed at the power of your virtue, humiliated by your courage, the father of lies still tries to tempt you. In order to torment and overcome your patience, which he believed he had weakened, he seems to have delivered you, during these times to all the anguish and horrors of want, that he might oblige you to bend the knee to the idol of crime and impiety, and force you to sacrifice to him the immortal fruits of the sufferings you have borne. Men can no longer delude themselves with these views of the prince of darkness, for the deceiving veil which concealed his artifices has been torn away.

"These means tend to one and the same end, that of effacing religion and virtue from all hearts. As there is no peace for the wicked one, he strives to procure the downfall of others. If he flatters, it is to destroy; if he promises, it is to seduce; if he gives, it is to corrupt. Do you not believe that the voice of justice and humanity can make itself heard in hearts closed to all sentiments of remorse?

"My dear daughters, I join in your combats, victories, tribulations and favors. Let us humble ourselves under the powerful hand of God, Who has visited us. Let us cast upon Him our solicitudes and our needs, and in the midst of our sufferings, we shall find our safety, our perfection and our strength in the God of grace, Who has called us to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus Our Lord. Amen. "From the place of our exile, July 19, 1798."

Mother Saint John and the Sisters of Bas received these paternal exhortations of their venerated Bishop with grateful love and respect and silently continued doing good. It was Saint Joseph's way and, undoubtedly, it is still the best way. Bishop de Gallard was not to return to France. The Concordat having suppressed the Bishopric of Le Puy, he remained in exile and died in Ratisbonne.

In 1802, Mother Saint Francis passed to her eternal reward. Sister of the Visitation, Mother Saint John and Sister Saint Teresa lavished their pious cares and tender affections on her until the end. At her death, the people of Bas, as witness to her zeal, her devotion and her virtues, showed, by their attention and regrets, the esteem and gratitude that the virtuous Superior had acquired in the city.

Sister of the Visitation was to live eight years more, of which she did not lose one minute. The people called her the "mother of the poor" and the "consolation of the afflicted." Many souls owed their salvation to her.

Mother Saint John, united as she was to God, certainly accomplished deeds, beautiful and good, during the five years which still separated her from her great mission, the reorganization of her community. Abandoning herself dutifully to God, she went about as in an ecstasy. She was greatly surprised one day when God revealed to her that He would take her to Saint-Etienne where we are going to accompany her.

BOOK II

A Day of Toil

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CHAPTER I

THE BLACK DAUGHTERS

THE Concordat had been signed six years, when Cardinal Fesch, Archbishop of Lyons, asked Mother Saint John to leave her retreat of Bas-en-Basset to go to Saint-Etienne. What could the Primate of France want with this humble Religious whom he did not know and to whom he was unknown?

In 1805, Cardinal Fesch had appointed as Vicar General Father Claude Cholleton, a priest as virtuous as he was prudent and energetic. Born in Saint-Symphorien-de-Lay, near Roanne, in 1751, Father Cholleton, called by God to the dignity of the priesthood, was appointed curate of Courzieu immediately after his ordination; later he was called to Sainte-Croix, the cathedral parish of Lyons; and finally he became professor of theology in the Junior Seminary of Saint Charles.

This seminary was founded in 1672, by Charles Démia, in the parish Saint Nizier of which he was canon. It was placed under the patronage of Saint Charles Borromeo, and had for its aim the education of priests who would be, at the same time, curates and schoolteachers in the rural districts. This seminary did very fine work during its too short existence. It disappeared at the time of the Revolution.

When, in 1790, Father Claude Cholleton was asked to take the oath, he was too clear-minded to hesitate even one moment and refused; as a consequence, he was sent into exile. He went to Italy. Perhaps he knew he would meet, in Bologna, one of the generous curates of his diocese, the worthy and virtuous Father Courbon. Other priests were there, exiles like himself. The idea came to him to give them a retreat. It produced such results that Father Courbon exclaimed: "Continue, my friend, and you will make saints of all your fellow-priests."

After the Reign of Terror, when the decree of tolerance permitted the resumption of a prudent apostolate, Father Cholleton returned to France. The constitutional priests returned also and took possession of the churches of which they had been the last parish priests. Prudence did not permit the true Catholic clergy to remain long in the same place. They had to continue doing good unobtrusively and they succeeded by means of missions.

The idea had come from the Diocese of Lyons. The priests, like the persecuted apostles, went from village to village to preach the word of God and to bring religious help to famished souls. The idea gained headway and missions were organized throughout France.

The Diocese of Lyons was divided into twenty-five sections. Twenty-five villages, very often in mountain districts, served as centers for twenty-five missions. At the head of each center was a Superior, assisted by an associate, several missionaries and a layman in charge of temporal affairs. The Superior, who was provided with very extensive powers, directed the mission under an assumed name, to shield him from harm. The associate replaced him in case of absence. The missionaries, with admirable self-denial and a total forgetfulness of their titles and past privileges, went from parish to parish, to celebrate Mass wherever they could, to administer the sacraments, to bring back those who had strayed away, to comfort souls and to revive the Faith everywhere.

The task of the missionaries was made easier by catechists, divided into three groups. Those of the first group remained in their parishes, where, discreetly and silently, they baptized the new-born in the absence of the priest, visited the sick, taught catechism, prepared the children for their First Communion, the sick for the Last Sacraments and called the missionary at the approach of death. Mother Saint John, the Sisters of Saint Joseph and all Religious dispersed over France were to occupy a place in this group, and they accomplished their allotted tasks with love and devotion.

The catechists of the second group, preceding the missionary, announced his coming and prepared his passage in such a manner that, upon his arrival, he was informed of the needs of the district and could, without loss of time, begin the exercise of his holy ministry.

Finally, the catechists of the third group, always men, accompanied the missionary, formed a guard around him and defended him if necessary. Aggressions were frequent and France had lost too many priests not to defend jealously those who remained and who were so greatly needed.

There remained the layman whose mission was most important. He knew everybody in the district, especially those on whom he could rely. He designated them to the catechist, who came as a scout, and the latter informed the missionary. This layman received the printed circulars and kept the records of the births, baptisms and deaths. It is clear that the work of the missions was perfectly organized; and one is not surprised to learn that the true Catholic clergy did untold good in this way.

On his return from Bologna, Father Cholleton was appointed Superior of the mission of Gumières and worked zealously, under the name of Eucher, until he was arrested and led to the Tribunal of Montbrison. The judges gave him his liberty which but increased the work of his apostolate. Arrested again, after September 4, he was condemned to deportation and transported to the Island of Ré while waiting for a ship to Cayenne. His noble qualities and his fervent piety won for him the respect of his companions in misfortune,—the priests who, like him, were exiles. Finding, in the former Lyonnais professor, the perfect model of priestly virtue, they chose him as their director of conscience.

Among these noble Confessors of the Faith was Father Guillet, a man of eminent virtue who had been director of the seminary in Chambéry. At the time of the revolutionary proscriptions, as Chambéry was still under the dominion of the King of Sardinia, he had seen a number of bishops and brother-priests take refuge in the Sardinian Seminary. By his benevolent charity, he had eased the pain of their exile. He was forced to flee when the victorious French army invaded

Savoy. He secretly returned from Piedmont, where he had emigrated, and resumed his ministry in 1795. In 1798, he was arrested and deported to the Island of Ré, where he met Father Cholleton.

These two great souls, appreciating each other, soon entered into a deep and holy friendship, which gave an impetus to their apostolic zeal. Seeing the advantages that their position offered them for the practices of the interior life, they resolved to work together to develop it in their dungeon, by making the spirit of prayer, meditation and recollection reign there. They succeeded so well that the prison became a monastery. In imitation of religious houses, all the exercises were made in common.

Canon Poivert, Vice Postulator of the cause of the "Martyrs des Pontons," wrote in the book dedicated to them:

> "The life of one thousand, one hundred, ten priests detained in Saint-Martin-de-Ré and Château d'Oléron carried great suffering with it. The prisoners, huddled together in damp dungeons, where space was sparingly allotted; and, scantily covered, they slept on the floor, without any mattress. The unspeakable hardship of being thrown in with robbers, assassins, and even some galley women of ill fame, whose odious proximity was never spared them, was added to the physical and mental sufferings of these faithful priests.
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> "To help them bear these trials, the proscribed held among themselves conferences of piety. They occupied themselves during the various hours of the day with prayers in common, meditation, recitation of the Divine Office and lessons in theology, Holy Scripture and Church History, just as they had formerly done in the seminary. At the end of some weeks they obtained chalices of baked brick, glass or pewter. They made sacred vessels out of the hollow weights of the convicts' chains. Altar stones made from slate were consecrated by the Bishop of Saint Papoul. These relics are now in the museum of the Diocese of La Rochelle. Altars were later erected in the attics and every morning Masses were celebrated, in succession, from five o'clock till noon. The inhabitants of the island and the castle tried to procure whatever was necessary for the priests to celebrate Mass; and the commissary eventually closed his eyes on this clandestine restoration of religion."

Father Cholleton escaped. In spite of perils, he crossed France, reached the mountains of Forez and resumed his ministry, which he exercised secretly until the signing of the Concordat. At that time he was named pastor of the principal parish in Saint-Etienne, the church of which parish, said to have been founded by Saint Robert, was known as the "great church."

In this parish, in a house at the corner of Rue de la Bourse, Father Cholleton gathered a group of pious women whom he had met in his apostolic journeys. Some were desirous of embracing the religious life, others of resuming this life which they had been compelled to abandon. Father Cholleton himself directed these virtuous souls, and with the zeal of an apostle and the austerity of an anchorite, prepared them for the life which they would embrace as soon as the law allowed it. A priest of solid virtue and great mortification, he formed his spiritual daughters after his own pattern.

To teach them to crush human respect, he made them dress in a costume which was neither religious nor secular. He used to say: "How happy I should be, if I learned that, when duty obliges you to go through the streets, you were found worthy of not only being covered with derision by the people, but also of having mud and stones showered upon you."

Was this wish granted? They say it was. The *Black Daughters,* as they were called on account of the color of their costume, had to bear many times the mean jokes of the children on the street. Imitating the saints, they rejoiced. It is by such means that one succeeds in subduing human nature and, when human nature is conquered, virtue easily increases.

Virtue, as well as mortification, was practised in Maison Pascal. Obliged to supply their own needs and often those of others, the *Black Daughters* slept little, worked much and prayed still more. They arose before dawn and went to bed late at night. In the house, they lived and prayed in common. Outside of the house, they spent themselves in works of charity, visited the sick and helped the dying. They were called by some people *Sisters of a Good Death.*

It was not, however, to the active life that Father Cholleton destined his daughters and to which they felt themselves called.

"What all fervent souls had considered in community life was primarily contemplation. Contemplation, assisted by austerities, retreat and silence, appeared to them like the objects for which they sacrificed what was dearest in life. The pious director, accustomed to long prayers, in which he forgot everything earthly to bury himself in an abyss alone with God, thought, when recruiting his dear daughters, only of procuring for them the repose of Mary at the feet of the Saviour. He often expressed his fear in the spiritual conferences which he gave them, that they might engage with too much solicitude in the works of Martha." [1]

The congregations were not yet authorized to be reorganized, and Father Cholleton had not finished his work when Cardinal Fesch appointed him his Vicar General. Obliged to leave Saint-Etienne, he entrusted his pious association to Father Piron. He, too, was a Confessor of the Faith. This new pastor was filled with kindness and devotion for the *Black Daughters,* and Father Cholleton did not forget them. In the distance, he awaited a propitious time to give his society a definite form. One day, when he was conversing with the eminent Cardinal, that prelate, recalling to mind the ravages left by the Revolution, denounced the ignorance of the truths of religion as the most fruitful source of disorder, and the first obstacle to be removed for the regaining of the multitudes. He pointed out with deep sorrow that young girls were growing up without any notion of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Church, of Christian morality, of their religious duties, or of their hope of eternal salvation. For want of proper instruction and salutary practices of the Catholic Faith, they were given up to the temptations of their own weakness and the passions of others. He looked in sadness for means to remedy this evil and to save, if not all the young people, at least the young women who, on becoming mothers of families, could exercise such a great influence on reforming society. The venerable Cardinal recalled the good that was done, with so much success, by the Sisters of Saint Joseph before the Revolution, and in his heart he was anxious to effect the restoration of that congregation.

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[1] M. le Chanoine Bouchage: *Chroniques de la Congrégation des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Chambéry.* Vol. I, p. 74.

The Cardinal asked Father Cholleton if the *Black Daughters* might not reap the heritage of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. He said: "Is not the first Catholic work, the one most useful to the Church, that which calls little children to Jesus Christ, to introduce them to the ways of piety in their infancy? The *Black Daughters* form a well-organized society. Their zeal is disposed to take upon themselves whatever of God's works will be shown to be most urgent. Why not encourage them to undertake an enterprise so pressing, so beautiful and so well adapted to the religious training they have received?"

Father Cholleton expected nothing less than this proposition. The prelate's questions, arguments and the tone of inspired conviction with which he stressed the necessity of this restoration, troubled his spirit, leaving him to see clearly the peril which threatened his projects. He, as well as the Cardinal, wished that Religious might resume the education of youth, and prepare, for the coming century, generations formed in the school of Christian piety. How could he have been indifferent to a resolution upon which depended the complete recovery from the moral ruin of society resulting from the Revolution? To engage his daughters in this enterprise meant to go counter to his most cherished ideas and to scatter his brightest hopes. The sudden transition from broad daylight to darkest night would not produce more baffling confusion than that which was felt by the humble founder.

However, the children's cause was won. Neither the obedience due to the Bishop of the diocese, the interest of souls, nor the manifestation of the Divine Will could permit a refusal. After explaining, with priestly modesty, the views he had conceived in prayer and which he believed came from Heaven, the venerable priest trusted to the decision of his Superior.

"Like another Francis de Sales, it may be said that Father Cholleton introduced his daughters to a life not of his own choosing; and that, in condescension to the opinions of others, he withdrew them from the path which he himself had traced. Saint Francis de Sales reluctantly placed his daughters in the cloister, after first vowing them to visit and care for the unfortunate. Father Cholleton, on the contrary, after having destined his community at first to a secluded life, was now going to send them into the world to minister to the various needs of the people. In forming his dear *Black Daughters* to religious virtues, the director, in the hands of Divine Providence, became the unconscious restorer of a new existence, more fruitful than that first one given to the family of Saint Joseph."[2]

To whom was he going to confide the reorganization of this religious family? Our Lord was to point out the soul chosen by him. We see what a small place man has in any undertaking. Man conceives a plan in his innermost thoughts, and becomes restless and anxious until it is accomplished. Behind the man, who is eager, few see God who hides Himself and Who leads man not to the hoped for end, but to the end which He has proposed to attain. God chooses the purpose of a work and also the agent who is to accomplish it; and, according as the subject approaches or draws away from the goal, God helps or thwarts him. God stopped Father Cholleton and called his attention to Mother Saint John.

Neither the Cardinal nor the Vicar General knew of the existence of Mother Saint John; neither did she know them. God knew Mother Saint John and He wanted her. In the Old Testament, God sent angels to carry His messages. To carry this one, He sent Father Hubert of whom we spoke in the first part of this narrative.

Father Hubert was a holy Religious belonging to the Capuchins who were dispersed from Monistrol. During the years of terror, he left his hiding place and went down the mountains to bring to the faithful and to the dying the help of our Holy Religion. He was a zealous apostle and a great orator. It was in this capacity that he was called to Lyons to preach the Lenten sermons. How did this priest know that the Cardinal intended to restore the Institute of Saint Joseph in his diocese? We are ignorant on this point, but the fact is, he knew it; and it was he who brought the attention of the prelate to the former Superior of Monistrol. He knew her better than anybody else. He had been her director before the storm. Moreover, he had seen her work at close range, because they lived in the same city, and, in a little city, it is easy to follow another and to form one's opinion. If Father Hubert suggested Mother Saint John, it was because he thought her capable of bringing her work to a fruitful end. The Cardinal sent a messenger to the modest Religious to propose this great mission to her.

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[2] M. le Chanoine Bouchage: *Chroniques de la Congrégation des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Chambéry*. Vol. I, p. 75.

One may get an idea of the effect produced on the Fontbonne family by this unexpected message. Upon its arrival, Mother Saint John was troubled and her parents alarmed. The former was frightened at the magnitude and the difficulties of the work proposed; the latter dreaded the loss of their child, the support of their old age. In order to keep her, the mother tried to lessen her value. She said: "She has no judgment." This statement makes one smile, for judgment was Mother Saint John's dominant trait. After much hesitation on one side and tears on the other, like true Christians all submitted to the belief that they recognized God's will in this extraordinary event.

It was decided that Sister Saint Teresa would remain in Bas near her aged parents to be their support, and that Mother Saint John, God's chosen one, would go away, like Abraham, into the country He had shown to her. Without seeking any explanation of the choice of God, she departed with admirable faith and perfect docility, leaving her paternal home fifteen years after the storm of the Revolution had driven her back to it.

On August 14, 1807, Mother Saint John was, for the first time, in the presence of those whom Heaven destined to become her daughters. She did not know them, nor did they know her. At once, however, a supernatural feeling drew them together and a bond of love united them. In a transport of faith, the daughters cast themselves into the arms of their Mother, and, trembling with emotion, the Mother pressed the children to her heart, an affecting scene which fills one with admiration.

Whom must we admire most? It is hard to say. Is not one admirable who accepts, for direction in the perfection and spirit of the Institute, souls of which she knows neither the talents, the defects, the resources suitable for the accomplishment of good, nor the cross-purposes which might oppose it? She was alone, and they were twelve. What would these twelve souls be in the course of nature—adversaries or allies? It was not without anguish that Mother Saint John wondered; and we consider her worthy of admiration who abandoned, at a simple sign of God, the apostolate that she knew and loved, to come and spend her strength, courage and heart in the midst of strangers.

These twelve *Black Daughters* who renounced, at the desire of the Cardinal, their first formation, to submit to the demands of a Rule which they had not chosen, to an authority which had given no proof yet of devotion nor of ability, and to a direction of whose wisdom and gravity they were as yet ignorant, were also admirable.

With a simplicity above all praise, she, who had been directress of the group, immediately resigned her authority and became the humble disciple of the new Superior. She was Anne Matrat, of Valla-en-Gier, in the Department of the Loire. She was the first to enter Maison Pascal. We do not know whether or not that was the motive for placing her at the head. We rather believe that it was on account of her rare qualities.

Mother Saint John wanted to know and to study thoroughly the life these pious women had lived in order to adapt them, as gently as possible, to the one which would replace it. Under her direction, the twelve continued to follow temporarily the rules drawn up by Father Cholleton. In this way, Mother Saint John saw with her own eyes the practice of the most heroic virtue. The fourth floor of Maison Pascal was a home of fervor. Seeing this, Mother Saint John was overwhelmed with sentiments of humility and gratitude towards Him Who had led her into the midst of these cheerful, frank and generous souls, who showed neither defiance, annoyance, nor reserve with respect to a Superior whom they did not know and to whom they opened their hearts as children to their mother. An affection full of confidence and charity was established between them and it never relaxed.

The Rule of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, composed by a priest of the Society of Jesus, Father Médaille, is full of the spirit of Saint Ignatius. It is wise and, at the same time, firm. This Rule was written, keeping in view the apostolic life that was the life of Jesus Christ Himself, the perfect Model of Religious.

Every religious life, even every Christian life, must have its portion of penance, expiation and reparation; but there are different ways of doing penance, of expiating and of making reparation. The mortification, at times very hard, of the mutual living of a common life; the fatigue of service; the demands of the sick; the ingratitude of those who are the objects of our devotion, and a thousand other things have an expiatory and a reparatory value. Are they not more difficult to bear than the penances of one's choice?

Mother Saint John tried to make her dear daughters understand this truth. One day she made them bring her all the instruments of penance they had for their use. These fervent souls had to make the sacrifice of them through obedience, and, gradually, the wise, prudent Mother abolished from their life what might have endangered their health. At the same time she carefully preserved the character of austerity that gives nobility to the religious life and a redeeming value to the simplest deeds. The community of Maison Pascal kept this character of fervor and holiness so well that it is still called with good reason "The Pearl of the Institute."

In 1805, the wearing of a religious costume was permitted by law. Clothed in secular dress, they had been living the life of Sisters of Saint Joseph in Maison Pascal for almost a year. The time for wearing its habit had come. On July 14, 1808, the twelve postulants were clothed in the habit and received a religious name. The Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyons was just restored. Here are the names of the first Sisters:

Mother Saint John,	Superior and foundress
Anne Matrat,	Sister Saint Francis Regis
Jeanne Marie Matrat,	Sister Saint Claire
Anne Marie Didier,	Sister Saint Paul
Suzanne Marcoux,	Sister Saint John Baptist
Jeanne Poitrasson-Gonnet,	Sister Saint Francis de Sales
Philippine Ménard,	Sister Saint Teresa
Benoîte Perrin,	Sister Marie
Antoinette Monteillier,	Sister Saint Michael
Marie Anne Pitiot,	Sister Saint Augustine
Antoinette Cessier,	Sister Marie Joseph
Marie Louise Foret,	Sister Saint Madeleine
Elizabeth Plaçon,	Sister Saint Agnes

From that day, no longer existed the Society of *Black Daughters,* it was now the Society of Saint Joseph. They had taken care not to say "Congregation," as that term would have been sufficient to make the society suspected in the eyes of the Revolutionaries. It was not of importance to let the public know that they were reviving the Institute. The important thing was to revive it. Under a different name the Sisters continued to occupy themselves with the same works; and not only were the Sisters themselves appreciated, but their habit was saluted with veneration wherever they went.

With respect to the dress, let us say that it underwent a transformation at that time. In the first Rule, printed with the permission of Monsignor de Villars, Archbishop of Vienne, in 1693, we read: "The Sisters of Saint Joseph shall be dressed as virtuous, modest widows." The head-dress of the widows of the seventeenth century, the epoch of the founding of the Institute, consisted of a hood of white linen, joined under the chin and partly covered with a cap of black silk. When, after the Revolution, the Sisters of Saint Joseph could resume their religious habit, widows no longer dressed in that fashion. Mother Saint John thought it possible, without deviating from the spirit of the founders, to replace the cap by the veil. In 1650, widows wore a white fichu over their shoulders; the Sisters had adopted this fichu. After the Concordat, the fichu was replaced by the guimpe. The habit then assumed a monastic tone which is suitable to virgins.

Father Piron, successor of Father Cholleton as rector of the principal church, was delegated by the Cardinal to preside at the reception. Some of his words, spoken in a manner which showed his deep feelings, so strongly impressed the pious congregation that they have passed down to posterity: "You are but few, my daughters; yet like a swarm of bees, shall you spread yourselves everywhere. Your number shall be as the stars of Heaven. But, while increasing, preserve always that humility and simplicity which should characterize the Daughters of Saint Joseph."

These words hold a prophecy and a counsel. The prophecy had so well been realized that Archbishop Ireland of Saint Paul, Minnesota, in a visit which he made to Lyons to the Motherhouse of the Chartreux, said with respect to the growth of the Sisters of Saint Joseph: "Your congregation is a Catholic congregation in the true sense of the word." Indeed, like the Catholic Church, it extends over the entire world and takes root everywhere.

The true Sisters of Saint Joseph have so treasured this counsel that they have gloried in living in humility and simplicity. These two virtues are their ornaments, their jewels and their treasure. No praise is dearer to them than this: "The Religious of Saint Joseph are simple." Simplicity is the mark of their family; they would consider themselves as having fallen away if this character disappeared. Fortunately, it has not. There is one in Heaven who is watching over its preservation.

An ever increasing fervor was there and new subjects came to Maison Pascal. One day, two young postulants were sent by Mother Saint John to a worthy priest who was interested in them, to tell him of their reception into the community. He asked them in a fatherly manner if they had sufficient nourishment, considering the austere rule of the house. "Do not be uneasy," they answered gaily. "At dinner they serve five courses," which they did not specify. The courses were soup, a plate of vegetables, a piece of cheese, bread, and water mixed with a few drops of milk.

The priest, satisfied, inquired no further. Coming in after the community dinner was over, the two postulants found, before the kitchen grate, their portion of a plate of macaroni covered with cinders that had fallen unperceived. Happy to imitate those great saints who had mixed ashes with their food in order to diminish savor, they contented themselves with picking off the biggest cinders and joyfully eating the rest of the food. "The next time," they said laughingly, "we shall be able to say that our dinner comprises six courses."

In this little Thebaid that was the cradle of the new Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, one heard chants of joy, hymns of praise, transports of gratitude and love. Fervor gave birth to happiness everywhere. It is useless to add that Mother Saint John was the vital source of this fervor. She did not like singularities. The veil of the common life must envelop the virtues of a Sister of Saint Joseph. Nevertheless, certain exterior practices of humility were still in use in the community. The venerable Mother took care not to exempt herself. The Sisters saw her one Good Friday, a rope around her neck, kneeling at the chapel door, kissing their feet. They also saw her taking her meal on her knees in the refectory like a culprit excluded from the family table.

CHAPTER II

MICARÊME—AND A RESURRECTION

HARDLY was the ceremony of reception in Maison Pascal finished, when a second group of virtuous souls begged Mother Saint John to adopt them. They were seven who lived in community not far from Maison Pascal in Rue Micarême. Fervent as the first and formed by the same director, they aspired to live in the cloister as soon as the law would permit. According to Saint Thomas, "if the contemplative life surpasses the active life, the mixed life which unites in harmonious proportion the activity of Martha with the prayer of Mary, constitutes the principal work of Christianity."

The Cardinal recalled this to the seven who formed this group, adding, "for the children, for the mothers, for the old, and for everybody, we need apostles. The Church needs them. The number of priests is insufficient. Enter the community of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. You will be the auxiliaries of the clergy. You will serve God and souls."

The seven did as the twelve had done. They placed themselves under the authority of the Superior designated by Heaven. Their postulancy began immediately and, as Micarême possessed a chapel, it was in this chapel on April 20, 1809, that they received the holy habit from the hands of Father Piron. Here again we record the names so worthy of esteem and veneration:

Charlotte Beneyton,	Sister Saint Ursula
Marie Beneyton,	Sister Saint Bernard
Etiennette Lachaux,	Sister Saint Etienne
Jeanne Marie Besson,	Sister Saint Pierre
Marguerite Rigaud,	Sister Saint Angela
Anne Cornillon,	Sister Saint Benedict
Marie Ginod,	Sister Saint Louis

Shortly after this, the fourth floor of Maison Pascal was abandoned and Mother Saint John grouped all her daughters in Micarême which was thus the first motherhouse. God reserved a brilliant future for this convent, and the impression left by those first members, who sanctified themselves there, was so deep that this tradition of sanctity has never been lost.

All these souls, which aspired so strongly after the cloister with Mother Saint John at their head, since even she wished at first to embrace the austere Rule of the Capuchinesses, led an intensely interior life without grille or cloister, and attained an intimate union with God at the same time. Outside of the cloister they sowed good seed wherever they went.

They had to create and renew. To restore the ruins piled up everywhere, God needed devoted hearts, hands and souls to whom He could communicate His power. God found these hearts, hands and souls in Micarême. Those who lived there expected nothing from creatures, but were capable of giving much because they recoiled from no devotion or sacrifice.

Orphanages, day-schools, boarding-schools, were opened almost at once in different sections of the city of Saint-Etienne. Pupils flocked there and by a special grace which showed the needs of the times and the solicitude of Divine Providence, postulants came in great numbers. Many true vocations were discovered. Mother Saint John seemed to have nothing to do but to receive and train novices. Under her direction, they went to God simply, but with all their heart; each one loved Him as a father, obeyed Him with childlike trust, and resigned herself completely to His guidance. The spirit of fervor was ever on the increase and the worthy Superior was the soul of this supernatural hearth.

At the same time that young women were seeking admittance to the Novitiate of Micarême, a renewal of religious vigor was being felt everywhere, and communities of Saint Joseph were established or reorganized in different places. The most important was at Ancy in the Department of the Rhone in 1809.

The foundation of the community of Ancy was due to the parish priest, Father Chazelle. For want of a house, the first subjects made their postulancy and their novitiate in the rectory. Then he bought, or had built for them, a house conveniently situated at the edge of the road, on the slope of Mont Saint-Romain-de-Popey. The Sisters were well settled there, but they were too far from the church, especially in winter, when the sun rises late and the roads are bad. They remained there, however, for almost nineteen years, giving to everybody an example of generosity in the service of God and devotion to their neighbor. The community was authorized by a decree dated at Saint-Cloud on April 10, 1812. The first Superior was Sister Saint Regis.

Until 1822, the receptions and professions took place in the parish church. That year, Ancy sent Mademoiselle Berthoud to the Chartreux to make her novitiate. She received the holy habit in the Church of Saint Bruno. Father de la Croix d'Azollete, later Archbishop of Auch, presided at the reception and signed the act of reception, as well as Mother Saint John. The young novice returned to Ancy and was known as Sister Elizabeth. God called her to Himself on October 15, 1828.

In the same year the community bought the old hospital of the monastery of Savigny which adjoined the parish church. Before the Revolution, each abbey had, outside its enclosure in an outbuilding of the monastery, a hospital for the people of the neighborhood and for strangers becoming ill in the course of their travels. This former hospital of the celebrated abbey became the convent of Saint Joseph. Later, when the Sisters bought a place nearer to the church, they sold the house near the road.

Until the unfortunate time of secularization, the Sisters in Ancy occupied themselves in the sacristy, with the sick and the school. Ancy was a model school for studies and manual training, which merited for the directresses several government rewards and the prize from the foundation, "Lombard de Buffières." In addition to Ancy, Mother Saint John had opened, in 1809, the establishments of Roche on the confines of the Loire and Auvergne, and those of Luriecq and Sury-le-comtal.

Father Cholleton had neither the joy of assisting in this growth of God's garden, nor the time to see even a little of the vast field that God was going to confide to his daughters for their apostolate. The Emperor had placed under the protection of his mother, Madame Laetitia, all the works of charity in the Empire. To know better the needs of each of these and the means for satisfying them, he called together, in Paris, in 1807, a general chapter of all the Religious Hospitalers of the Empire. The assembly was set for November 27. Long before this date, the Cardinal had gone to Paris and when the time came for the chapter, he wrote to Father Cholleton to attend it.

Father Cholleton had hardly recovered from an illness that had brought him to the brink of death. He went, nevertheless, at the invitation of the Cardinal; and scarcely had he arrived in the capital, when the fatigue of the journey obliged him to go to bed from which he never arose. On November 25, two days before the opening of the Assembly, he expired, dying in as saintly a manner as he had lived.

The Assembly lost much by his death. In his rôle of Ecclesiastical Superior of Religious communities, the Vicar General alone was acquainted with important details. Thanks to the memoranda written out in advance by each directress of the works of charity, they supplied, as well as they could, this regrettable absence. The paternal solicitude of His Eminence procured aid to certain communities of Saint Joseph, among which were Vaugneray and Saint-Genest-Malifeux. Some compensation was granted them for the damage caused by the Revolution.

Father Bochard, parish priest of Bourg, succeeded Father Cholleton as Vicar General and as Superior of the congregation. He was a distinguished, learned and virtuous priest. He, too, was a Confessor of the Faith. Having succeeded in escaping from the prison in Bourg, where he had been confined, he took refuge in Switzerland until the partial mitigation of frenzy permitted him to return to France. He then consecrated himself to the missions of Saint-Claude. After the Concordat he was appointed parish priest of Bourg, from which place Cardinal Fesch took him as Vicar General. The Department of Ain was at that time a part of the Diocese of Lyons.

In 1809, Father Coccard, parish priest of Sury-le-Comtal, Department of the Loire, asked Father Bochard for Sisters. His request was so earnestly made that the Vicar General felt he had to demand an immediate acquiescence from Mother Saint John. At that time, the community was quite in its beginning. Mother Saint John had no available subjects. What could she do? Sury needed Sisters. The perplexed Mother had to take teachers from the establishments in Saint-Etienne and send them to this other school. Three Sisters were then chosen for Sury. Sister Marcoux, the Superior, was among the number. The little colony set out on October 6, and soon arrived in a place where nobody awaited them, not even the one who had requested them, since he did not count on their arriving so soon. Neither house, classes nor resources were ready for them.

The worthy priest, grieved at their discomfort, offered them his rectory, which they did not accept. They had already decided to return to Saint-Etienne, when an unusual settlement of their difficulty was proposed to them. While the situation was being discussed with the priest, some pious Christian women of the parish, hoping to overcome the difficulty, had gone in quest of a lodging. The proverb says: "What women want, God wants." Not only the women but the whole community wanted the Sisters. They were there, they must not let them go. Here is what these zealous Christians suggested.

"There is a stable not far from here. The proprietor promises to quarter his horse in another place and to give you the stable, if it suits you. Will you accept it?"

A stable was something that resembled so closely the manger of Bethlehem, that is was deemed most suitable for the Sisters of Saint Joseph. They accepted and slept on the straw. The next day, after consoling themselves with a fervent communion and pious prayers, they set to work. It was a question of transforming this place into a convent. The stable was large. One corner served as a dormitory, another as an oratory, a third as a kitchen and refectory, and a fourth as a parlor. The kitchen had no fireplace; two disjointed stones did instead of it. Glass was lacking in the windows; oiled paper replaced it. One charitable neighbor brought potatoes, another lent a kettle, some others gave covering to put over the straw. In short, everything was arranged and the Sisters found the food and the poverty of their Bethlehem delightful. Gradually it soon had the appearance of a decent habitation. Finally, the parish priest secured a site for the school and everything was satisfactory.

At that time, the opening of a school for the peasant children was not difficult. They received the children and with minimum expense managed to do the greatest possible good. The Sisters had all the children of the district. They did not aspire to make savants of their pupils. Their whole ambition was to form steadfast Christians, to provide them with the necessary knowledge for life, to teach them how to read, to write, how to compose a letter and to calculate their receipts and expenditures.

During the memorable winter of 1809, the people of Sury had much to suffer. The rigors of the season affected the Sisters as well as the people. They were, none the less, the salvation of the neighborhood by their charitable devotion. Installed but a few months in such a miserable manner, one was surprised at their extreme poverty. But, when one has the love of God in his heart, he always find sa way to act as if he were rich. To procure the money necessary for almsgiving, the Sisters devoted a part of their night to needlework and took for themselves only what was necessary in the matter of food so as to keep others from hunger. They were so kind to everybody that during the first year the hearts of all were won by them.

The personnel of Sury scarcely was in working order when Mother Saint John, in answer to Cardinal Fesch's expressed wish, had to send a new swarm from the hive to Lyons. His Eminence wished to entrust to the Sisters of Saint Joseph the House of Retreat for priests. This Retreat had changed its location several times. The first, opened in 1737, was in a rented house; but the following year, the diocese was able to buy, at Croix-Rousse, an estate of more than ten acres on which they built "a chapel and buildings for sick and infirm priests" which they called Seminary Saint Pothin. The street facing this seminary was known as Rue Saint Pothin.

The buildings, the support of the priests and the staff entailed heavy expenses. Furthermore, there was an important element lacking, one that may be considered essential. There were no religious women for the service of the house. All offices were performed by men, well chosen servants, no doubt, but who evidently did not possess the devotion and delicacy that one finds in a Religious consecrated by vows and guided by a supernatural principle.

At that time, the Archbishop of Lyons did not have at his disposal, for diocesan works, the good and faithful organization that was later to bring to this same work such zeal and devotion. For work of this kind and also for many other tasks, the Sisters are at least as well fitted as others and certainly perform these tasks with less expense. The Seminary Saint Pothin was a great expense, and, in spite of the tax of five thousand pounds placed on the clergy, the resources were not sufficient.

To relieve the priests from this tax, Cardinal de Tencin transferred the Retreat to the ancient Abbey of Ile-Barbe. The Cardinal relied on its income to procure the necessary resources for the shelter of the veterans of the priesthood. This place functioned during the entire life of the prelate. At his death, Bishop de Malvin de Montazet, his successor, ordered it closed on August 28, 1782. The sick and aged priests no longer had a roof to shelter them.

The Revolution came, followed by the Concordat; and after that things that had been beaten to the ground, were restored. In 1806, Madame de la Barmondière, a great and generous soul, conceived the charitable idea of having a house built for aged priests at number 7 Rue Cléberg, Fourvière. She could house a few, perhaps five or six, and that was better than nothing.

In 1809, the Cardinal invited the Sisters to this house. Five Sisters left Micarême to take care of this hospice for priests The author quoted above says: "The introduction of the Sisters into this establishment was fortunate. It is, perhaps, what was needed in the old abbey and at Ile-Barbe. This beginning was only the germ which was to assure the future of this work. One day it was to extend its branches, like a tree, over the whole diocese and produce the most fortunate fruits."

The Religious were Sister Saint Elizabeth Noailly, Superior of the Sisters and the establishment, because at Fourvière there was never a priest as Superior; Sister Saint Pierre Groselait, Assistant; Sister Mary Teresa, sacristan; Sister Saint Pelagia Burnichon, infirmarian, and Sister Saint Simon Alumbert, in charge of the kitchen. "The house prospered under these five Sisters and two of them, the Superior and the cook, opened a house in Vernaison, forty years later." When Monsignor de Bonald came to Lyons, he declared that since the establishment did not satisfy the needs of the diocese, it was necessary to transfer it to another site.

A magnificent piece of property was sold at auction in Vernaison on March 18, 1843. The Archbishop bought it in his own name and later, in 1855, turned it over to the clergy of Lyons. Since 1843, they have put up buildings, constructed terraces, made roads, planted fruit trees and laid out shady walks. On May 17, 1846, the sick, helped by their Sister nurses, entered this delightful home that had been built expressly for them and which bore the name "Saint Francis de Sales Home."

Mother Elizabeth organized the new establishment. "A great spirit of faith was particularly noticeable in her. In the priests, she saw Jesus Christ. She had for them a deep respect that shone in all of her acts during her whole life. She called them "her priests," loved them and desired to see them happy. She incessantly recommended to her young Sisters to practise patience and respect with regard to the priests.[1] Today the work still continues with the same spirit of faith and veneration.

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[1] *Maison de Retraite des Prêtres du diocèse de Lyon.* E. Vitte, éditeur.

After the transfer of the Seminary Saint Pothin to Ile-Barbe, the estate of Croix-Rousse was sold for the profit of the diocese. When Catholic works had resumed their normal course, the Religious of Saint Elizabeth bought a part of it to reorganize their convent. The community later occupied the buildings of the former seminary of which Rue Saint Pothin preserves the memory. The other part was bought by the Motherhouse of Lyons, which needed a country place to permit the boarders, postulants, novices and professed Sisters to relax and enjoy fresh air.

The name of "old seminary," given by the people who sold the property, has led Canon Rivaux into error. He thought it concerned the Great Seminary that was formerly on this hill in Saint Polycarp section. This is not true. The country home of the Sisters of Saint Joseph was never the property of the Great Seminary Saint Irénée. It was part of the Retreat House for priests which was known as Seminary Saint Pothin.

Canon Rivaux is not mistaken when he speaks of the respect with which the Sisters of Saint Joseph took possession of this property; of the emotions they had as they walked over these paths that had been traveled, before them, by so many noble veterans of the priesthood. They prayed with fervor and still pray under the shade of these trees that witnessed the recollection and prayers of these priestly souls. A mulberry tree that can shade more than one hundred people under its branches, has been for many years the assembling-place of the novices for spiritual reading.

CHAPTER III

YEARS OF GROWTH

THE municipality of Saint-Chamond, in 1811, requested Sisters for the Charity Hospital. This hospital was not to be established but to be reformed, something entirely different. The work was complicated. It comprised the care of the sick and the education of the orphans of both sexes. Father Bochard, having been acquainted with this, thought at once of removing the Superior of Sury, who already had had experience with difficulties, and of giving her the direction of this hospital, which charge she immediately assumed. Mother Saint John appointed a new Superior for Sury.

At Chamond, the task was especially difficult, because it entailed coöperating with the founders in reforming the abuses that their lack of ability had created. The keen, penetrating mind of Sister Marcoux very quickly fathomed the cause of the abuses. With tact and prudence, she simplified the complications of the service, and balanced the power of those whose coöperation was necessary.

These last did not see, without vexation, the resulting order in the house, and the more the improvement became felt, the more was their self-love irritated. They went so far as to thwart the action of the newcomers, to pervert their intentions, to cause insubordination among the children and to misrepresent the most just measures as tyrannical demands. Economy was called avarice, the least justifiable complaints, the most uncalled for grumblings, became grievances against the Superior. In the parlor and throughout the city, they spread the most baneful rumors; and as one does not easily stop on the downward path, they even made false reports to the members of the lay administration, to the Vicar General and to the Superior General. There was a sorrowful Calvary to climb. The source of the plot was discovered. Two of the guilty ones were discharged, the other two united their efforts with those of the Sisters and peace returned to the house. Later, these two asked to be admitted into the congregation and became excellent Sisters.

Mother Saint John had hardly time to breathe. As soon as one request was satisfied, another had to be granted and often several at the same time. She often found this painful and difficult, but since God wished it, she did not think it impossible, because the impossible becomes possible when God takes part in it. Her great spirit of faith inspired her to rely on Him Who had called her to restore her Institute, and she trusted Him. After stating her needs to Him, because she trusted Him, she sought for means to realize the apparently unrealizable. Faith triumphed over obstacles. That is what happened when Cardinal Fesch asked her to send Sisters to Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux in Lyons.

An institute of mercy called the "Work of Saint Frances," had been in this street of Saint John's section from the middle of the seventeenth century. Charitable women gave very valuable assistance to the poor of three parishes, Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux, Sainte-Croix and Saint Georges. These ladies soon saw that because of their other duties they were not able to give to the poor all the needed services. Thus, as often happened, they called a religious society to their aid. Two Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul had come to Lyons on August 14, 1671, to take care of the poor. A little later, two others were called to teach the children and finally a fifth one to prepare syrups, infusions and herb medicines according to the doctors' prescriptions. In temporal matters, such as expenditures for the poor, the Sisters were subject to the Ladies of Charity.

Seeing the good established in this manner, other houses had been opened in different parts of the city. The Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul had also undertaken the direction of them and one no longer called them anything but the "Sisters of the Kettle," because their charity consisted, above all, in the distribution of food, especially soup, for which large kettles were in daily use.

During the Revolution, when the Decree of August 18, 1792, suppressed congregations, confraternities and the religious habit, the Sisters of Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux could, while wearing a secular dress, continue the service of the poor, according to Article 2, which was worded thus: "In the hospitals and houses of charity the same persons will continue, as before, the service of the poor and the care of the sick by private title, under the supervision of the municipal and administrative bodies."

At Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux, this tolerance did not last long. Lyons had risen in revolt against the horrors of the Convention and was besieged on August 8, 1793, and taken on October 9. The besieged who had resisted the Republican bombardment for sixty-three days had to yield to the most terrible enemy of all—starvation. "Lyons did not surrender," related General Précy, the commandant of the place, "its enemies penetrated the walls only when the Lyonnais departed."

Then began the horrible massacres. On La Place de Terreaux people were shot and guillotined; and every time a head fell, a group, picked from the mob and paid as in a theater, clapped their hands and cried out: "Long live the Republic!" The noise was transmitted from section to section of the city as far as the Plateau Croix-Rousse.

"We shall die from fatigue," said the members of the temporary commission, charged with executing the orders of Collot d'Herbois, the worst enemy of the guilty city. But he found the guillotine too slow and he answered: "Republicans, be inflamed with the same fire as I, and you will recover strength." What stirred this fire was the hatred he kept in his heart for the Lyonnais who whistled when, as a simple, poor class comedian, he appeared on their stage.

The occasion for revenge was too good not to be seized. Without any trial, he had the condemned tied to one another. He gave orders to conduct them to the plains of Brotteaux, to line them up, to place cannon behind them and to kill them by firing upon them. This order was carried out. During this time the paralytic Couthon went through the streets in his sedan chair and struck with a little hammer the buildings vowed by him to destruction. Then the revolutionary hordes rushed on them to burn and to destroy them.

The Sisters trembled in Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux. Sister Teresa, the Superior, had not spared her services to the besieged. The house, relatively important, was not destroyed, but the Sisters had to leave. Fortunately, the furniture, put on sale, found no purchaser. This permitted the Sisters to reorganize their home in 1796. The Sisters of Charity had to submit to a severe trial in 1809. Saint Vincent de Paul, their founder and also that of the Lazarists, had written in his Rule that the Sisters would be under the sole authority of the Superior of the priests of Saint Lazare. The Emperor had reëstablished the Catholic religion, because he wanted to use it for his own ends. His intention was to govern the religious houses to his own liking; hence, he wanted to subject the Sisters to his authority. The Superior of Saint Lazare, Father Hanon, protested. The Emperor had him arrested and confined in the Fortress of Fenestrelle in Piedmont.

There was an irregular election for a new Superior in Paris. The Emperor wished to impose on the Daughters of Charity a Superior General who had not been canonically elected. A great number of convents refused to acknowledge this Superior, although recognized by the powerful ones of the time. They did not wait long for their punishment. By order of the prefect, the rebellious ones had to leave their convents, within twenty-four hours, and to return to the world, since the motherhouse and all the other convents were closed to them. On account of this act, the communities of Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux, Saint Paul, Saint Nizier and Ainay were dispersed. This was a great loss for these parishes and many others. The poor, the sick and the unfortunate, whom these charitable daughters of a most charitable father had assisted, were not to be abandoned. Cardinal Fesch addressed himself to the congregations devoted to charitable works in his diocese asking them to assume the burden of the stricken places. Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux became the care of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

It was not without apprehension that Mother Saint John thought of sending her daughters there. In temporal matters, the house was subject to a civil administration. After the departure of the Sisters, the Council had appointed a secular directress, Madame Brunet, to replace them. She had filled a subordinate position in the house but she did not have the qualities necessary to direct it and the Cardinal considered it necessary to replace her.

The obligation of too often launching into works with subjects who were not sufficiently prepared, annoyed Mother Saint John. The priests were crying for auxiliaries in their apostolate. "The harvest is ready, but the laborers are few. Send us Sisters." One could not be insensible to these appeals and refuse workers whom God seemed to have chosen and designated when drawing them from the world to send them to souls. With her great good sense, Mother Saint John said to herself: "God uses me to form Religious. He has His grace which does more and better. The needs are urgent; grace passes; we must go to souls at once before it is too late." Notwithstanding regrets, the postulancy had to be shortened in order to give assistance to the priests.

These novices who were too hastily trained but full of faith and virtue could bring valuable assistance to the work, but they could not direct it. For this difficult task, Mother Saint John had the twelve of Maison Pascal and the seven of Micarême. The training of these was solid. She could confide to them both the work and the young Sisters whose novitiate was to be continued. As soon as the work became less difficult, she recalled the one who had created and sustained it, and sent her to another place to begin and maintain another foundation. Father Bochard was there to stimulate the Sisters. This post was confided to Sister Saint John Marcoux. She was recalled from Saint-Chamond where she had established peace and order in ten months. She received the command to go to Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux, where she would have to face new difficulties and sufferings. Obedience kept her from recoiling. She went with three other Sisters. We read in the Chronicles:

"The new Superior presented herself to the directress and communicated to her the order she received from the Cardinal. She announced that she came to take charge, but she expressed herself with so much propriety, courtesy and humility; her countenance, in accord with the exquisite refinement of her language, was so prepossessing that the lady, in spite of her natural haughtiness, was captivated and only insisted on the necessity of referring the matter to the administrators. They protested energetically and refused to register on their books those sent by the Cardinal. Nevertheless, the Sisters began the work, obtaining, from the good will of Madame Brunet, for their own food the rations given to the convalescent patients. Then they waited for God's next command.

"Difficulties seemed to increase. Some friends of the Sisters advised them to bend to the storm. The timid partisans of peace did not fear to affirm that obedience should not keep them in such a perilous place in face of opposition. The courage of the pious Mother, strongly shaken, would have weakened but for comfort which came to her from a mysterious source. Called to the parlor, she found a venerable priest who said to her: 'Desist from carrying out the intention you have of leaving this house. God wants you here; it is only His enemy who has suggested retreat.' Speaking thus, the priest withdrew without the Sisters ever knowing who he was, how he entered or how he went out, as no one but herself had seen him and that only during the short time of his secret confidence.

"From that day the anguish of the young Superior gave place to confidence; her Sisters felt a similar assurance of victory; the opposition of the administration disappeared like a cloud which is scattered suddenly. Public opinion, divided up to that time, according to the inclinations or interests of each one, declared itself on the Cardinal's side and applauded the introduction of a religious corporation evidently more capable than a lay direction for a service of devotion." [1]

The famine during the winter of 1809 had exhausted the savings of the working-people of Lyons. They needed help more than ever. When the Sisters of Saint Joseph took the direction of the establishment, they were obliged to increase their alms to twelve hundred portions of soup a day; and no new foundation had been established to increase the ordinary income. The Sisters are the daughters of Divine charity; where they put their hands to feed, to care for or to cure, although they have nothing, they again find resources because they ask them from God Who has them. The Sisters performed real prodigies. One could have said that their alms were multiplied with their needs. Although incessantly overrun by a famished multitude, the regularly appearing bills, the care of the sick at home, the distributions on the premises, were not suspended, nor were funds lacking for the expenses of ever increasing bounty. Thus antipathy gave place to entire confidence.

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[1] M. le Chanoine Bouchage: *Chroniques de la Congrégation des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Chambéry*. Vol. I, p. 96.

Mother Marcoux did not remain long at Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux. Mother Saint Paul Didier, of the group from Micarême, appointed Superior in 1812, continued the work of her predecessor. The Novitiate of Micarême was located in too small a place to receive all who applied for admission to the congregation. Certain convents were authorized to receive and train postulants who were to be subject to Mother Saint John and the Cardinal before being admitted to reception or profession. Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux was one of these convents.

Among the young girls who were received by Mother Saint Paul, we may mention Mademoiselle Chanay of Villefranche-sur-Saône. Her postulancy was very short, as her vocation showed not the least doubt. On January 3, 1815, she received the habit and was known as Sister Saint Joseph. The next day she left Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux to go to Chazey-sur-Ain where she made her two years novitiate; and on January 3, 1817, she pronounced her vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the parish church. Another chapter tells us of the magnificent career of Sister Saint Joseph.

While the "Misericorde" was continuing its work in Lyons, the Empire crumbled, the Superior of the Lazarists left his prison and the affairs of the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul were taken to Rome. The Pope ordered a new election. A lawful Superior was chosen, and the Sisters, so brutally driven out, were requested to resume the religious habit and to return to their convents, if the present occupants consented to give them back, or, to other convents of their community.

With her great soul ever kind and just, Mother Saint John, who had but lately felt the sorrow of the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, rejoiced when justice was rendered to them. She recalled her daughters and gave back the work to those Sisters, temporarily replaced by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, who had done so much good in Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux. At a short notice, they had gone there and at an equally short one they returned, ready to begin the same work in another place. To do good where God wills and as He wills, should be the only thought and desire of a true Religious.

While these grave events were taking place in Lyons, Mother Saint John was working unceasingly in Micarême. Besides the houses of which we have spoken or will soon speak, many other convents had been opened.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE SMILES OF THE MIGHTY

ALL the convents which Mother Saint John had established or aided in restoring, belonged to the Diocese of Lyons, a diocese large enough to use the entire apostolic forces of the growing congregation. The diocese which comprised the Departments of the Rhone, the Loire and the Ain surpassed in population all other dioceses of France and had, for suffragan sees, the Dioceses of Grenoble, Chambéry, Valence and Mende.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph were satisfied to answer the numerous appeals that came from all parts of Lyons. That was indeed the thought of the humble and venerable foundress; but the designs of God care little for boundaries. In the divine plan, the daughters of Saint Joseph were destined from the beginning to go beyond frontiers. The Institute was to shine in every country in the world. It was their own Cardinal who sent them to the neighboring diocese. In 1812, while the Emperor was leading his great army to the Plains of Russia, Cardinal Fesch, who had lost favor with his nephew because he had disapproved of Napoleon's conduct in regard to the Pope, had gone to join Madame Mère at Aix-les-Bains in Savoy.

The Duchy of Savoy had become, through the conquest of the Republican armies, the French Department of Mont Blanc, and was now a part of Napoleon's vast Empire. The Revolution had done much harm in this duchy, particularly in Aix. The bell had been melted, the belfry torn down, the church transformed into a barracks, the cross turned upside down, the statues broken, the tabernacle and confessionals burned, the sacred vessels stolen, and the city given over to all the disorders of impiety.

The Concordat of 1801, while reëstablishing religion, had

CHAPEL OF THE MOTHERHOUSE OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH
LYONS, FRANCE

not repaired all these disasters. The Cardinal contemplated them with a distressed heart and lamented especially

> "the spectacle offered to him in the neglect of young girls who were left to roam the streets of the city, without instruction, without supervision and without care for proprieties, exposed to all the dangers of idleness, irreligion and debauchery so prevalent in health resorts. He determined to remedy this condition and, without informing any one of his resolution, he decided to send Sisters of Saint Joseph to Aix-les-Bains to teach the girls." [1]

Without further delay he wrote to his vicar to make all necessary arrangements for sending three Sisters of Saint Joseph at once. Sister Marcoux, whose value he knew, was to be among them. On August 2, 1812, the stagecoach brought the Sisters to Chambéry where no one expected them. This city, ancient capital of a state that extended into Italy, just beyond Piedmont, was now the See of Chambéry and Geneva, of which Lyons was the Metropolitan See. This diocese had been formed by the union of the Dioceses of Tarentaise, Maurienne, Geneva and Chambéry. Archbishop de Solle was the ordinary.

The first duty of the Sisters on their arrival was to call upon the prelate. They were welcomed by the Archbishop "with that amiable kindness which shone on his venerable countenance." After making the protestation of their profound respect and perfect submission, they gave him their letters of obedience which stated that they were sent, in the name of Cardinal Fesch, by their Superior General and their Ecclesiastical Superior, Father Bochard, to educate the young girls of Aix-les-Bains.

One can easily imagine the surprise of the worthy Archbishop who had neither invited the Sisters nor learned that the parish priest of Aix had asked for them. He had not been informed of their coming, nor of the orders given by the Archbishop of Lyons with regard to an establishment that was to depend solely on Chambéry. The Archbishop would have been justified in putting off the execution of the Cardinal's project for at least forty days. Archbishop de Solle interpreted the proceedings of his Superior in the most benevolent sense. He saw the candor of the three Religious. He began to weigh the immense results for good that their services would obtain and, rising above all feelings of wounded self-love, caused by an omission which came from no personal disregard, he accepted, with perfect meekness, the favor Divine Providence offered him. Frightened, at first, at the surprise that the announcement of their mission had produced on the Archbishop, the Sisters were soon reassured by the kindly tone prevailing in the Archbishop's questions, by the courtesy of his observations and by his evident leaning toward the most indulgent solution.

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[1] M. le Chanoine Bouchage: *Chroniques des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Chambéry.* Vol. I, p. 107.

The prelate showed them great marks of kindness. As he feared that the necessary preparations for the reception and installation of a community had been forgotten together with the canonical formalities, he wished to know on what resources they intended to rely for their living. He recommended them to come to him in all the difficulties, privations or troubles that they might experience.

> "The rules of a good administration demanded that before signing the ordinance authorizing the establishment of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Aix, the Archbishop should get an idea of the constitutions of this congregation. While awaiting the results of this episcopal investigation, he interested himself, with the aid of Father Goybet, in procuring from the Dardel family, a hospitality most graciously accorded and gratefully accepted." [2]

The constitutions of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, fruit of the experience of its founders, Bishop de Maupas and Father Médaille, had given proof during a century and a half of satisfactory observance. The approval of bishops and archbishops, whose names are mentioned in the preface of the constitutions, warmly recommended them. The Sisters, then, could not doubt the result of the examination; and, indeed the report of Father Bigex was so favorable that Archbishop de Solle, not satisfied with giving the Sisters permission to open a house in Aix, conceived the idea of inviting to Chambéry another group of Religious of this congregation to teach the young girls of his episcopal city.

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[2] M. le Chanoine Bouchage: *Chroniques des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Chambéry*. Vol. I, p. 109.

Extending his paternal solicitude still further, the admirable prelate, guessing that the Cardinal, who had forgotten to notify his suffragan had, in all probability, neglected to inform the civil authorities of Aix, wrote to the mayor, M. Fleury, a letter of warm and pressing recommendation in favor of the Religious who were to be presented to him. Upon receipt of this letter, the mayor assembled his Council and acquainted them with the fact. There was something of the Bonaparte about Cardinal Fesch, and it was not at all surprising that the Council looked with suspicion upon this information and launched out into charges, not against the Sisters, but against him who had sent Sisters into their commune without even informing them of his intentions.

The mayor had cause for astonishment. Nevertheless, after a time granted to lawful charges, he advised examining the affair in itself. In short, this act of the Cardinal showed his kindness towards their city. The congregation which he had just authorized in Lyons would surely render eminent services in Aix. It would be foolishness to deprive themselves of these services because of wounded vanity. In the Municipal Council of Aix, the quarrel thus died before it was born; little by little, discontent was appeased and, before dissolving, the assembly proposed to confide the "Little Hospital" to the direction of the Sisters. They would find there a home and pupils.

The "Little Hospital" was the Castle of Aix, transformed today into a town hall and museum, but which was used, at that time, as a military school and hospital. The former residence of the Marquis of Aix was large, but the fury of the Revolution had almost demolished it. The tearing down of the stone balconies on top of the walls, of the battlements and of the towers, had made of it a ruin. Doubtless, there were still some beautiful pieces of sculpture to be admired, but the infiltration of the rains had rotted the beams and rafters; the floors were sinking and the badly joined windows gave free access to wind and cold.

This hospital was without income, furniture or linen—more shelter than hospital, the Sisters saw. It was the month of August, the season for baths. The needy bathers were admitted to take shelter under its roof, on the sole condition of lodging there as well as they could. The sight of the pallets, the filth, the disorder that reigned in this place and the repulsive odor which came from the rooms, touched the hearts of the Sisters. Overcoming promptly this painful impression, they said one to the other: "This is indeed a true theater of charity."

At once devotion expressed itself in deeds. Those who had come as teachers began to perform the duties of infirmarians. They visited the sick, civil and military, dressed their wounds, prepared remedies and spoke comforting words to all. They then busied themselves with the house, where order and cleanliness were especially lacking. In a few days, beds and linen were procured by the Sisters and the place was completely transformed. It was with great trouble that they succeeded in arranging for themselves, in the midst of the ruins, a corner in which they might take the short rest which they needed. In a hidden recess were placed two of their cots, the third being placed in the corridor. During the first days, not only was there no suitable shelter, but there was very little food. All these difficulties and inconveniences may be attributed to a want of foresight. Far from complaining, the Sisters joyfully accepted the situation, seeing in it a pledge of the blessings on the work which they were undertaking.

God did not permit such privations to last. Some pious, Christian women of the parish, talking about the newcomers, said suddenly: "Have they what is necessary?" They decided to go to the hospital where, they declared that on that very day, the Sisters needed even bread. Moved to tears, these ladies hastened to send provisions, and the Sisters never again lacked food.

They had been living in the castle about eight days when the Cardinal came for his first visit. The ruinous state of the castle made a disagreeable impression on him, and the poverty of those who lived there caused him great surprise. He then realized his want of thought. Opening his wallet, he sent his servant to buy the necessary furniture; and he was filled with admiration for his virtuous daughters who were smiling and complained of nothing. When leaving the "Little Hospital," the Cardinal visited his sister, Madame Laetitia, and related what he called his "droll adventure." Madame Mère repeated it, and soon the poverty of the Sisters of Saint Joseph became a topic of universal interest.

During the entire period of the Empire, the waters at Aix were the fashion. That year the city saw Madame Laetitia, the dowager empress; Madame Josephine, the repudiated empress; Madame Caroline, Queen of Naples; Madame Pauline, Princess Borghèse; Madame Joseph Bonaparte, Queen of Spain, and Madame Bernadotte, the wife of the field marshal, who later became the Queen of Sweden. Thenceforward, all these crowned heads were interested in the Religious and their patients.

"The queens wished to see the Superior. She charmed them so much by her modesty, by the keenness of her mind and by her humility, that each one wished to converse with her and to visit the 'Little Hospital.'

"Thereafter, patrons were not wanting and great was the astonishment of these illustrious favorites of fortune at the sight of the poverty in which this humble religious family lived; but greater still was their amazement when they beheld their tranquillity of soul. The interior peace which the Sisters' attitude reflected, the expression on their countenances, and their holy conversation, filled with confidence and devotion, delighted them profoundly. They found themselves suddenly in the presence of a contentment,—new for them,—whose mysterious principle excited their curiosity. A revolution was taking place before their eyes, until then dazzled by the brilliance of an unbroken prosperity. Enlightened by the light which came from the hidden God, they saw His presence partly revealed in the midst of the poverty of His spouses. The august visitors withdrew, so deeply moved and so thoughtful that the 'Little Hospital' became the object of their charitable activities." [3]

This interest on the part of royalty changed the conditions in the hospital. The mayor and his council made necessary amends and promised support to the Sisters who were the first Religious established in Aix for the primary instruction of girls and for the hospital service to the sick in that city. Queen Hortense endowed ten beds in the hospital for the less fortunate who needed the waters, on the condition that every year, in June, the directress of the hospital would have a Mass said in the parish church for the repose of the soul of her friend, Madame de Broc, who accidentally met her death in the Cascade of Grézy. Before her departure from Aix, the Sisters presented to the Queen, a young girl of rare virtue who felt herself called to the religious life. The Queen supplied her dowry and the expenses of the novitiate. This young girl, who had been sent to the Novitiate of Micarême, gave great satisfaction. Laurence Boutton received the holy habit on January 8, 1814, and was known as Sister Saint Louis. Later, she was appointed Superior of Motte-Servolex where she remained for eighteen years.

The community of Motte-Servolex, about three miles from Chambéry, was established and supported by Marquis Victor Costa de Beauregard. Canon Bouchage tells us: "The eighteen years that Sister Saint Louis spent at Motte-Servolex saw the dawn of a transformation of which the parish still receives the fruits. In spite of her weakness and continued sufferings, she developed the intelligence of the children, taught them the mysteries of faith and opened their hearts to piety. She trained them in good deportment, usually so often neglected among the peasants and the poor. She changed them into Christian virgins and prepared future virtuous mothers. She fought against the bad habit of begging, which degrades the lazy and deprives them of self-respect. Her influence in the homes of the poor brought to them a taste for order and a regard for personal hygiene which helped to cure deformities of body and soul."

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[3] M. le Chanoine Bouchage: *Chroniques des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Chambéry*. Vol. I, p. 122.

Queen Hortense had well placed her generosity. Her protégée and the hospital of Aix did honor to her. Although far away, she did not forget the "Little Hospital" and obtained from the Emperor, a decree, promulgated August 26 and 27, 1813, ratifying the endowment of the ten beds offered by her and a government income for their support. One can still see the Sisters of Saint Joseph devoting themselves in Aix in the establishment called since then:

"Hospital of Queen Hortense."

CHAPTER V

"WHO TOUCH THE ARK"

IF one consults the records of the times, it may be seen that, under the Empire, the government did nothing for the instruction of the children of the lower classes. Must we blame the Emperor for this? No! "Napoleon weighed with the same gravity and equal importance what might be suitable for little girls as in deciding the most serious and weighty questions of state"; [1] but his aid being sought on all sides, he had not the time to accomplish everything. The Emperor's uncle, Cardinal Fesch, did his best to supply this regrettable deficiency. Lyons and Aix are proofs of it. He was to attend also to other places.

In Chambéry, Archbishop de Solle and his priests were distressed at the sight of young girls who roamed through the city with unseemly deportment, given up to the dangers of chance encounters. The Archbishop wanted to have a remedy for this evil in his episcopal city, as soon as it was possible. Since January, 1805, Archbishop de Solle had continued his task of reconstruction in the diocese under his care. This diocese comprised more than six hundred parishes. His vicars, Father de Thiollaz and Father Bigex, helped him by every means in their power. "These two men," said Napoleon, "are capable of ruling an empire." Father Guillet, Superior of the seminary, was also a very valuable assistant.

The venerable prelate, who needed priests, money and every other aid, saw a ray of hope in the thought of the valuable help that the Sisters of Saint Joseph could bring. The work accomplished by them in so short a time near him, and under his protection, caused him delight. He soon invited such auxiliaries to Chambéry. Addressing himself directly to Cardinal Fesch, he manifested his desire to have some of the Sisters of this congregation for his girls' schools, whose registration might be about seven hundred pupils between the ages of eight and thirteen. This request was favorably received at the Archbishopric of Lyons. Father Bochard asked the Superior General to satisfy this request as soon as possible.

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[1] *Mémoires de la Reine Hortense.*

Mother Saint John would have been very happy to satisfy both Father Bochard and the revered prelate, from whom she and her Sisters had experienced kindness; but, overwhelmed by demands for subjects from all directions and for the houses already existing, she saw the impossibility of establishing a house in Chambéry.

The Vicar General, who was anxious to please Archbishop de Solle, urged that the foundation be made. With the records in her hands, Mother Saint John proved to him that she could not take more than two Sisters from the schools already in existence, and the young novices were not sufficiently prepared in the practices of the religious life and duties as teachers. The novitiate must not be interrupted. Father Bochard agreed with her, but, accustomed as he was to superhuman efforts, he told her that she must take the two Sisters and send them while waiting for the next entrance of candidates. In vain the worthy Superior spoke of the inability of two Sisters to teach so many children, but she had to yield and send them.

They arrived in Chambéry on November 7, 1812. A home, situated on the fourth floor of a house on Rue de la Cathédrale, was given to them. It had a view of the roofs and yards. It was small, narrow and poor in appearance. Two hundred children filled it in a few days. These little girls, who had lived till then in the indolence and freedom of the streets, were sorely in need of space in the inadequate quarters where they were packed together. In the beginning, constraint, authority and work were very distasteful to them and they bore them badly. The Sisters had much trouble; this did not surprise them, however, for in one way or another, beginnings are always painful. If the Sisters were not discouraged, their Superior General was worried. She was not ignorant of the fact that, even among the most heroic, physical and moral forces have limitations, and she felt that her dear daughters were submitted to a terrible trial. While waiting to do better, she thought of temporary assistance.

"The Archbishop protected the Sisters and watched over their needs. In return, they taught catechism, reading, writing, arithmetic and manual training under his direction. The public was acquainted with their hardships and work only by the rare meetings of teachers and parents. Moreover, the elevation of the site, separated from the street level by one hundred and two steps, made it like a holy mountain, seldom frequented by the world, and placed above its noise and interests."

One day, the Sisters, who were overburdened with work, were made very happy when the Superior of the hospital in Aix came to help them. A community may not have less than three Sisters. The Superior General, who could give but two, thought of a combination. While waiting for another Sister, Mother Marcoux would direct both houses, Aix and Chambéry, dividing between them her strength and her devotion. The burden was heavy. Aix and Chambéry are separated by more than eight miles, and at that time there did not exist any means of communication between the two cities. The journey back and forth had to be made very often on foot. This was fatiguing for the one who made the double trip.

Mother Saint John realized this. She wished to appoint a resident Superior, but no means of changing conditions were at hand. Seeing this, the good Mother made a sacrifice to help her daughters. In order to assist her in her laborious task, she had appointed Sister Saint Francis Regis, usually called Sister Saint Regis, as her assistant. Mother Saint John appreciated the value of such an assistant, but her daughters in Savoy were being overcome by work and worry. She must not permit it. Finding no other means to help them, she made the sacrifice of the Sister who seemed indispensable in her own convent, and appointed her Superior of Aix, leaving to Mother Saint John Marcoux the direction of the house in Chambéry. The Superior General gave, in this circumstance, a magnificent example of forgetfulness of self and generosity. Her daughters soon followed this example.

Hardly was Mother Saint Regis installed, when a terrible epidemic swept over Aix. The Sisters were seen everywhere sacrificing themselves in the care of the sick and, especially, the poor. They taxed their strength to such an extent that they became victims of the disease. Mother Saint Regis was brought to the gates of death. At this news, Mother Saint John Marcoux hastened to the assistance of the Sisters. She lavished on them the care of the tenderest of mothers and succeeded in saving them.

The scourge did not spare Chambéry. They had to close the school in order to help the needy. As in Aix, the Sisters contracted the disease. Their condition was soon pronounced so serious that the doctor suggested that the Last Sacraments be administered. The Superior alone remained at their bedside consoling them while she, herself, mustering all her faith, made to God the sacrifice He seemed to demand. She spent fifty nights almost without sleep, appealing to Heaven for help. At last, the danger disappeared and the dear patients, with their heroic infirmarian, gradually recovered their strength, and the pupils returned.

Sympathy developed for the community. Sympathy brought help and the organization of the classes was improved. The mutinous and capricious pupils had insensibly yielded to the good influence of their teachers; affectionate submission had replaced insubordination; confidence followed, and piety, in transforming these young souls, revealed to everybody the benefits of the serious Christian education that had been given to them. The entire population of Chambéry was won over to the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

While all these events were taking place, the Empire was crumbling. Czar Alexander had said to Napoleon, "I have no concern about religion. I am the head of religion in my empire as I am of the State. My pope is but a valet for me."

"Why," said Napoleon, "could I not do as much? At least I would be rid of these quarrels with the priests."

The conqueror imagined that all that was but the affair of a simple imperial decree, and the Royal Decree was ready. Cardinal Fesch forbade the signing of it.

"My sister," he said one day to Madame Mère, "the Emperor is ruining us; he is destroying himself. I see the moment when he will be broken, annihilated. Those who touch the *ark* experience the same fate. If, in quality of mother, there still remains some influence over him, use it to turn him from these projects which he plans."

One morning, in the month of March, 1812, after his Mass, the Cardinal went to the Emperor's residence where he had not been for some time. Then, without any preamble, without any oratorical excuse, he demanded of his nephew, whether there was any foundation for the sinister rumors spread about the schismatical dispositions of the *Caesar*. The latter answered nothing.

Not able to stand it longer, the Cardinal burst out: "Read history. Is there a single outrage of this kind which remained unpunished? Giants have fallen."

The Emperor rose furious. "Go," he cried, "prophet of evil. I do not need your lessons; return to your diocese; you will not leave it till I command you."

By decree of August 26, 1812, Napoleon suppressed the major party for the attitude of his uncle.

"Where is he leading us?" said Madame Mère. "I would not be surprised, indeed, if God gave him a severe lesson."

"Where is he leading us?" The answer came soon. The Emperor led the French to the disaster of Moscow, to the Béré-sina Pass, to the invasion of France by the allies, to Waterloo, to Saint Helena. When the *Monitor* announced the terrifying news, the Cardinal said to Father Allibert, "The finger of God is manifest; no one but Him could strike down the Mighty One. It is evidently a chastisement from Heaven. Since Pharaoh's time, perhaps, there has not been a more striking one in the history of the world." [2]

On July 6, 1809, Pope Pius VII had been taken from his palace on the Quirinal and led a prisoner to Savone in the province of Genoa. Three years later on June 9, 1812, the Emperor had him transferred to Fontainebleau, where he arrived in an almost dying condition. At the same time, Napoleon left with his great army for the Russian Campaign. In 1814, Pius VII was given his liberty by those who were going to take it from *Caesar*. The Pope left the Castle of Fontainebleau to regain possession of his States on the eve of the day when the vanquished conqueror entered this same castle to sign his first abdication, on April 10, 1814.

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[2] Mgr. Ricard: *Le Cardinal Fesch.*

The Allies banished Napoleon to the Island of Elba; but this island was too small for the Eagle. One day, he spread his wings and with a powerful effort took his flight to France. On March 1, 1815, he burst upon Golfe Juan and began the period of One Hundred Days. Louis XVIII, frightened, abandoned the Tuileries. On March 20, the Eagle slept in the palace of kings. On June 14, he was in Belgium. On June 18, he was defeated at Waterloo.

Cardinal Fesch, who was obliged to leave France, thought of settling in Rome with Madame Laetitia. He expressed this desire to the Sovereign Pontiff. "You are welcome," Pope Pius VII answered. "I will do all that depends on me to make the stay pleasant for you. The City of Rome has always been the fatherland of exiles. It will be yours in a double sense, both as cardinal and uncle of the Emperor." It was in Rome that the Sisters of Saint Joseph would find their Archbishop later.

Queen Hortense, whom we cannot forget, valiantly bore with this change of fortune. Driven from France on July 17, 1815, at the same time as the imperial family, she thought she could take refuge in her castle on the shore of Lake Léman; but the Swiss Confederation gave her orders to leave Switzerland at once. She returned to Aix to await the decision of the allied powers concerning her fate. Through the petition of the Allies, she was afterwards permitted, by the Swiss Confederation, to live as the Duchess of Saint Leu in her castle near Lake Léman.

Queen Hortense left Aix on November 28, 1815. One may read in Chapter XXI of her "Mémoires," the account of her return to God, in 1816, and of her confession at Einsiedeln. We do not think that it would be presumptuous to say that her relations with the Sisters of Saint Joseph, whom she loved and venerated, helped toward this conversion. Her charities to the poor and to the hospital must have been powerful advocates with God.

The hatred of the Allies driving her onward, she wandered for some time in Constance, in the Grand Duchy of Baden; sometimes in other countries. At last, she was allowed to live in the Canton of Thurgau, Switzerland, in the Castle of Arenemburg, where she remained until her death on October 5, 1837, at the age of fifty-four.

CHAPTER VI

IN CARTHUSIAN CLOISTERS

WHILE the Empire was crumbling, the Congregation of Saint Joseph went on increasing. Its development was nothing short of miraculous. The Sisters of Saint Joseph were invited to all parts of the three Departments of the diocese. Mother Saint John gave as many as she could, but less than she desired to give. The parishes which had them congratulated themselves; the others grieved at being obliged to wait. When His Eminence or his vicars went to these favored sections for their pastoral visits, they heard the priests praise the good services of these modest auxiliaries. They also heard the regrets and complaints of those who had not as yet been able to have them. Cardinal Fesch thanked God for having permitted him to revive an Institute that was to be so valuable an aid to his diocese.

Nevertheless, the more glorious the success, the greater the need for a strong central government was felt. The Archbishop of Lyons was the Superior of all establishments; but the pastoral charge of his immense diocese did not permit him to take a very active part in each community. The Vicar General delegated to replace him had numerous duties and could follow the work of the congregation only along its broadest lines. To supply for this he, in turn, appointed the parish priest, who thus became the Superior of the convent. As such, he had a very fatherly interest in the Sisters. That was an advantage.

There was, however, a disadvantage. No matter how saintly each priest might be, his own nature, mind and grace remained. The congregation risked, therefore, having as many ideas as directors. If there are virtues common to all religious institutes, there are special ones for each institute, according to the end it has in view. In one, it is the spirit of penance; in another, the spirit of silence; in yet another, the spirit of immolation. In the Congregation of Saint Joseph, the spirit is humility, charity and simplicity. Unity in one body was necessary. A single novitiate could alone create this unity.

Mother Saint John had wished for this single novitiate as soon as she arrived in Saint-Etienne, for subjects came in large numbers; but neither Maison Pascal nor Micarême had rooms large enough to accommodate all the candidates who applied for admission. The congregation was forced then to tolerate several novitiates until the central one was organized. Another reason made this single novitiate indispensable. Some parishes were rich in vocations; others had none. In the first, laborers were not lacking in the Father's vineyard; in the second, the field lay waste for want of laborers. In spite of their zeal, the priests could neither initiate nor support the works for which they felt the need, and which they saw flourishing among their neighbors.

In order to protect the isolated communities from the danger of each one developing a particular spirit and of losing that of the Institute, a central novitiate was needed. To satisfy the needs of all, the Superior General and her council distributed the subjects admitted. This permitted them to help the parishes devoid of vocations. Since it was not one corner of the field, but the entire vineyard of the Father of the great human family that was to be sown, watered and cultivated, laborers must be sent to the entire field. It was a question of undertaking a real reform. The two founders, Father Médaille and Bishop de Maupas, would surely have exacted this indispensable reform if they had been able to foresee that the "Little Design" [1] would assume such great proportions and that the Sisters of Saint Joseph would one day overspread the world.

Cardinal Fesch felt the necessity of this change and worked for it; but the imperial catastrophe sent him into exile before the reorganization was accomplished. Father Bochard, his delegate, had to continue the work. God had already designated the Superior General of this large religious family. It was Mother Saint John. The center, however, was not to remain in Saint-

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[1] See: *La Congrégation de Saint-Joseph de Lyon.* Paris, Letouzey.

Etienne. It was more suitable to bring it as near as possible to the episcopal residence to permit having recourse to the Archbishop, easily, and at any time. Lyons was thus selected.

The restoration, proposed to Mother Saint John in 1807, was to be a real creation on account of the new form which the Institute assumed. It was not the humble Religious who had conducted these events; she allowed herself to be led. She had not taken upon herself the charge of this large congregation. God had chosen her. Mother Saint John would have preferred to govern the community of Maison Pascal combined with that of Micarême, and to direct it as she had formerly directed Monistrol; but, because new times had created new demands, she submitted.

From 1814, the Sisters were actively busied with the transfer from Saint-Etienne to Lyons. The next year, the Superior General had to make frequent journeys to confer with the Archbishop and to select the place where they would establish the motherhouse. It was finally decided. Facing the hill which formerly crowned the old Forum, and from which the "Virgin of Fourvière" today overlooks and protects the city, there rises another hill. On its summit, the Sisters of Saint Joseph built their home in 1816.

About the sixteenth century, the plateau of this hill was a pleasure resort for the Lyonnais. Toward the middle of the century, the sons of Saint Bruno built a monastery there and converted the mountain of noise and worldly feasts into a place of prayer and silence. An immense ballroom, remodeled and decorated, became a temporary sanctuary in which, on October 18, 1584, a monk, sent from the Grande Chartreuse, offered the Divine Sacrifice for the first time. Beside it, the Carthusian monks laid the foundations of a magnificent church. For lack of funds, the work was many times interrupted; but, as soon as the coffers were filled, work was resumed. In 1736, a century and a half later, the ball and cross were placed on the imposing dome of the building.

The Chartreux of Lyons, like all the others, was a group of isolated buildings, of villas we might say,—"a group of cells," in the language of the monks. Each monk lived independently in his hermitage composed of several rooms, among which was a workshop. A little garden surrounded each of these hermitages. The monk cultivated the flowers, the vegetables and, according to his inclination, sculptured in marble or wood, forged iron, wrote or painted. All these separate dwellings opened into a common cloister of which the monastery of Saint Bruno is a type. This cloister led to the church, the chapter room and the cemetery.

It was in this cloister that Mother Saint John at first intended to house her religious family. For almost ten years all the ceremonies of reception and profession took place in the church, if the candidates were numerous; in the chapter room, when they were but few. The monks' cemetery became a place of recreation for the postulants and novices.

Near the cloister and the church was Château Yon, an old dependency of the monastery. This Château, which had been confiscated with the monastery and sold in 1791, had had several owners. In 1815, it was the property of Jerome Nivet. It was scarcely more than a ruin surrounded by land suitable for building and cultivating. Mother Saint John realized the advantage she could draw from it and acquired it. The deed of sale is dated June 1, 1816.

After the Revolution, Cardinal Fesch, tempted by the magnificent situation of the ancient Chartreux, had bought with his last money some of the buildings of the monastery and the hostelry where the monks received visitors and travelers not admitted to the cloister. As the hostelry was a large, beautiful square building, the Cardinal dreamed of making it the center for a society of learned and eloquent missionaries who would be called "Missionaries of France." A decree of the Emperor forbidding missions which gave too much influence to the clergy ruined his plans. Overcoming the difficulty, the Cardinal established a "School for Higher Ecclesiastical Studies" and created the "Society of Priests of Saint Irénée," missionaries of the diocese. This society became a nursery for bishops.

By the preaching of its members, it rendered, and still renders, immense service to the diocese, to parishes of France and to other countries. The Sisters of Saint Joseph took care of the sick missionaries, their clothing, the household linen and the kitchen duties, which they still perform.

Château Yon was bought, but it was not habitable. While awaiting repairs, a hermitage of the Chartreux, in the east wing of the monastery, was placed at Mother Saint John's disposal. All arrangements having been made, one month and a half after the purchase of the castle, Mother Saint John and several Sisters of Micarême left Saint-Etienne and settled in the cloisters. Those who formed the nucleus of the motherhouse lived there in great fervor and extreme poverty because they had to meet heavy expenses for repairs and for the construction of a new building.

Hardly were Mother Saint John and her Sisters settled in the eastern hermitage, when Father Coindre, curate of Saint Bruno and missionary, called upon them. He brought with him two young children whom he had found in the streets, and who were without parents, protectors or a home. Blessed with a kind heart and zeal, the charitable priest had pity on the young girls and took them to the Sisters; he, himself, taking charge of their support. His compassion for abandoned children extending to more than these two little ones, the virtuous priest resolved to give them companions by establishing an orphanage. A few days later, there were seven under the care of Mother Saint John and her Sisters.

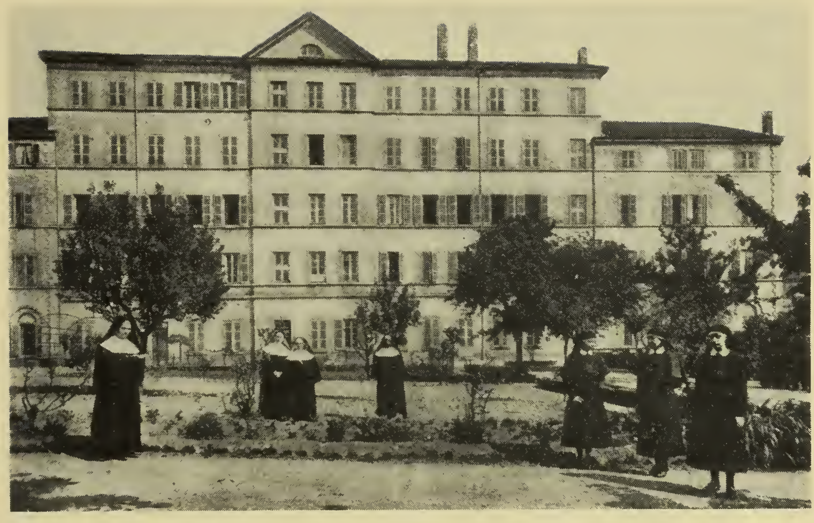
The hermitage was too small for seven girls and their guardians. In the cloister, the third southern hermitage was occupied by only two persons, Mademoiselle Chirat de Souzy and her friend, known only by the name of Mademoiselle Adèle. It was to the first of these virtuous Christians that Father Coindre spoke, in order to settle the question of housing these girls. Mademoiselle Chirat gladly converted a part of her home into a shelter for children, who were immediately transferred there in company with Sister Clotilda. It was not sufficient to give the children a home; they had also to be fed and clothed; and, in spite of his kind heart, Father Coindre could not think of doing for seven, for ten or more, what he had thought of doing for two. There was need, therefore, to look for resources. Divine Providence saw to it that the little *providence* had what it needed.

An association of pious ladies took charge of providing for the needs of the children. The president, Mademoiselle Thévenet, was rich. She devoted her income to them. Mademoiselle Répond, whose fortune was very large, took no active part because she was old; but she attended the meetings and gave so liberally that the orphanage might have been called "Providence Répond."

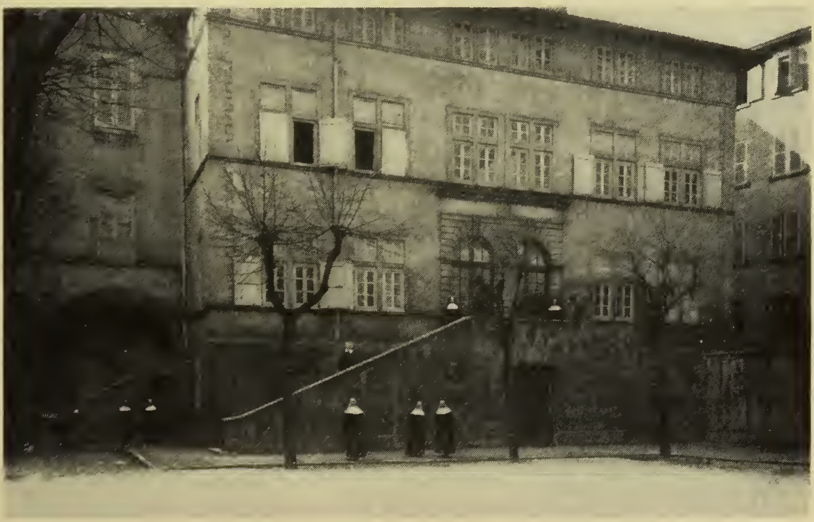
Madame Jouve belonged to the association from the beginning. She loved Sister Clotilda, and the latter had recourse to her in all circumstances. Generous help also came from some of the priests of Saint Irénée, whose names are inscribed in the list of benefactors, among them Father de la Croix d'Azolette and Father Mioland. These priests became distinguished prelates of Holy Mother Church. The names of many ladies of the parish are also written in the society's book of gold.

Thus, the "little *providence*" was well protected by Divine Providence. The number of orphans increased in proportion as its resources increased. There were so many that, in 1817, Mademoiselle Chirat's hermitage could no longer shelter them. In the cloister of the ancient Chartreux, opposite the home of Mademoiselle Répond, there was an unoccupied hermitage which Father Coindre obtained gratuitously. This new location could receive but a limited number of orphans.

Father Coindre, who was eager to receive all he met, began a search for an estate. At Fourvière, M. Jaricot, the father of the foundress of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, owned a large house and garden. Father Coindre bought them and asked Mademoiselle Thévenet to establish a new home and a workshop for poor young girls. Near these charitable homes and for their support, a boarding-school was started. Several of the Society of Saint Bruno went to Fourvière to help Made-



MOTHERHOUSE OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH
LYONS, FRANCE



CHÂTEAU YON
CRADLE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH OF LYONS, FRANCE

moiselle Thévenet. Such is the origin of the boarding-school of Jesus and Mary.

The ladies of the society continued their interest in the Providence of Saint Bruno. As fees were not fixed, they gave according as needed. Sister Clotilda conducted the house so well and with so much economy that soon she could declare to the members that, barring accidents, the work was now able to support itself. From that day the ladies stopped their meetings and the direction of the temporal affairs of the orphanage, but they did not give up their interest and help whenever Sister Clotilda called on them in times of difficulty. As more children came, a house opposite Clos Jouve was acquired. It is in this house that the Providence of Saint Bruno is located at present, under the sole direction of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

During this time, the restoration of the cloisters and the erection of the motherhouse were in progress; but there was the same delay with the castle as there had been with the Church of Saint Bruno. The building advanced according to their means, and, as resources were not large, the work progressed slowly. It was only in 1823 that the motherhouse was finally completed. Mother Saint John had directed the undertaking with a wisdom and skill that won the admiration of the workmen and even of the architect himself. The Mother and daughters were quite delighted. Trouble, however, was in store for them.

To allow the entrance of fresh air and light into the new building, Mother Saint John had wished for large windows. Father Bochard was shocked. "It is luxury," he said; "these windows are in opposition to the simplicity of Saint Joseph." And, without any regard for the title of Superior General which Mother Saint John bore, he reprimanded her severely in the presence of her daughters, and ordered her to have the windows made smaller. When leaving, he added: "The community which is to occupy the castle will be able to enter it immediately. The novices, for whom the new building is destined, will remain in the cloisters and will be given a new mistress."

The venerable Mother, who had seen but a question of hygiene in these large windows, was surprised that her Superior could see anything else. She was above all deeply afflicted that she was separated from her novitiate, the principal part of her work. Nevertheless, she received this reprimand with admirable humility, and, on her knees without any complaints or murmurs, accepted the undeserved blame and the punishment which accompanied it. The Sisters, who were suffering as much as their Superior, tried to justify her in explaining her reasons. The Vicar General was inflexible and Mother Saint John carried respect and obedience to the point of heroism.

The date of the separation of the novitiate and that of the reunion, which took place sooner than she expected, was written by the venerable Mother herself. No comments accompany these two dates. The suffering as well as the saintly Mother's works were for the King and for Him alone. It is through her that we know that the community entered Château Yon on November 28, 1823. As winter was not favorable for masonry work the changes in the windows were postponed till the spring.

About this time, the government, which was not able to take away the title of Archbishop of Lyons from the exiled Cardinal, was successful in depriving him of the administration of the diocese. Monsignor Gaston de Pins, Bishop of Limoges, was unexpectedly appointed Administrator Apostolic and Father Bochard lost the power that he had had under Cardinal Fesch. In order to be in conformity with the views of the new Archbishop, Mother Saint John submitted the question of the windows to him. Since the prelate was favorable to large windows, they remained as they were and Mother Saint John tells us that the novitiate left the cloisters on March 5, 1824. The two dates, concerning the entrance to Château Yon and the novitiate's leaving the cloisters, are authentic.

There can be no doubt that Mother Saint John was called by God to fulfil a double mission: to establish and to unify—that is to say, to found new convents and to restore others. This organization and unification gave birth to the Congregation of Saint Joseph of Lyons, from which came a number of similar congregations, subject to different authorities, but all united by the closest ties of charity.

The one chosen by God acquitted herself well of her double mission. We do not learn this from documents written by her, for she has left none. She did not write because she did not think of writing nor did she have the time. If she has left no writing, she has left deeds instead; deeds, so numerous that it will be possible for us to present to the reader but a few taken at random from the archives. Her works speak for her. The life of Mother Saint John is linked with the life of all the convents which she either founded or restored.

CHAPTER VII

A HISTORICAL SPOT

IN 1815, while Mother Saint John was still at Saint-Etienne, Father de Mayol of the Chartreux and Father Oriol, parish priest of Lupé on the Loire, went to the Archbishop to announce the desire of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lupé to become part of the restoration that was taking place in the Institute. Father Bochard received the visitors and their request very favorably and promised to attend to it. During the organization of the great work, Mother Saint John went back and forth frequently between Saint-Etienne and Lyons. Profiting by one of these journeys, Father Bochard informed her of the application of the two priests and proposed to her to increase her already numerous family by twelve members.

Lupé, whose name Mother Saint John heard for the first time, was so near Maclas that it seemed a part of it. That was the case originally. Short distances seemed long in this country so beautiful in spring, but which had such abundant snow in winter that it was necessary to travel by means of a sleigh or to try to keep one's balance on a frozen road.[1]

Gaston de Gaste, Lord of Lupé, and Lady Isabella de Brive, his wife, regretted this hardship. In 1445, they were inspired to make a foundation in order that Lupé could have its own chapel, which would be dependent on Maclas. They gave funds and titles of revenues in exchange for which "the parish priest promised to have Mass said every Sunday, vespers chanted, water blessed and bread consecrated, except on Christmas and Easter when the entire religious family would assemble in Maclas, to celebrate together the mystery of the day in the parish church."

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[1] Ce chapitre est écrit d'après les archives de la Communauté, le manuscrit de M. L'Abbé Granjean, curé actuel de Lupé, et les cahiers de M. Oriol.

Things progressed thus until 1635. At that time, the parish priest of Maclas, being the only priest there, could no longer leave his church; and Divine service was discontinued in Lupé. The inhabitants of Lupé had to go to Maclas to fulfil their Christian duties. In 1663, the snow fell so abundantly that for five weeks the people were unable to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This affected not only the inhabitants of Lupé but those of the neighboring villages who went to the chapel that was nearer to them than their own churches.

To provide against all these inconveniences, Catherine de Meuillon, Countess of Suze, and Lady of Lupé, obtained from the Archbishop that the chapel be erected into a parish church. This happened in 1675. The countess had given for this purpose a sum of money willed to her by her mother. The Lords of Lupé became thus the patrons of this church, for which they chose the parish priests.

Five priests had already succeeded one another in the parish of Lupé when, in 1758, Father Tardy, curate of Planfoy, was appointed parish priest. He knew of the services rendered in the parishes by the Sisters of Saint Joseph and he wished to have some of them in his own parish. He obtained without any trouble, from his Archbishop, permission to bring the Sisters to Lupé. In 1759, the year of Mother Saint John's birth, a community of four Sisters was established there. It was the worthy priest's sisters or cousins who furnished all the subjects. They were Marie Anne Tardy, Anne Marie Tardy, Marguerite Tardy and Marie Tardy. Like all the Sisters of Saint Joseph, they vowed themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. The worthy priest, however, did not long enjoy his work. He died in 1762 from an illness whose nature we do not know. He was only forty-one. He had, at least, the consolation of seeing the community increase in numbers.

In 1781, Father Oriol assumed the direction of the parish. He was only twenty-eight, but he was a true priest, full of zeal for God's glory and the salvation of his flock. From the time of his taking over the pastoral charge, the spirit of religious fervor spread everywhere, manifesting itself among the people by a revival of the Christian life.

The castle of Lupé had been bought in 1734 by M. de Mayol who had thus become Lord of Lupé, but he did not trouble himself about the affairs of the parish. With the coming of Father Oriol, everything changed. The apostle communicated his zeal to those who came in contact with him. From that time, the house of Mayol and the rectory of Lupé worked together.

The community of Saint Joseph thanked God for having such a friend. Father Tardy had housed them in a little dwelling near the rectory; but they knew that they would be obliged to leave this temporary shelter, for postulants were applying in such numbers that the house was too small. Father Oriol gave them a vineyard and some land on which the Mayol family had built a large house. This became the home of the Sisters in 1786, and the little house was sold.

"It was for the Sisters," we read in Father Oriol's notes, "and for those who were to succeed them, that M. Zéphirin de Mayol, Lord of Lupé, victim of the storm of the Revolution in the Brotteaux at Lyons, on December 21, 1793, had had erected, at his own expense, the building on this site." Father Oriol ceded this ground and the vineyard adjoining it, convinced that his successors would approve this grant; whereas, technically, it was understood that the Sisters would be obliged to pay the tax for the acquisition of the mortgage on this piece of ground.

The Revolution followed. A fictitious sale happened soon enough to protect the house and vineyard from confiscation. Joseph Guigal de Bellin, a distant successor of the founder, lent his name for this purpose. The priests were subjected to many annoyances by the National Assembly. On December 19, 1790, Father Oriol took the constitutional oath. Like many of the priests who believed in the good intentions of the government, he swore to fulfil his duties with exactitude and to be faithful to the law and to the government. This was not sufficient. On February 21, 1791, the administrators of the district of Saint-Etienne wrote to the municipal officers of Lupé:

> "We warn you that the oath your priest took is null, and we urge you to ask him to take it again in the prescribed form; and within eight days to send us the report that you have drawn up on the subject of his acceptance or refusal; because, in the case of refusal, you must notify him that comformably with Article 5 of the decree of November 25, he will be reputed as having renounced his office, and provision will be made for his removal."

Father Oriol refused to take the oath. He likewise refused to read from the pulpit the letter from the constitutional bishop, Lamourette, the intruder in Lyons. Consequently, Father Oriol was replaced by Jean Louis Castellan, originally from Saint-Etienne, assistant of Sury-le-Comtal, who assumed charge of the parish on July 31, 1791, the seventh Sunday after Pentecost. Father Grandjean's manuscript remarks: "By a singular coincidence the gospel of that day warns us against false prophets."

The arrival of the intruder was a time of great sadness for the Religious and for the parishioners. Everybody refused to be present at the installation of the apostate priest. Rather than take part in it, the magistrate and the recorder of the commune resigned. There were only three women, four fusiliers, who represented the National Guard, and some of the municipal officers in the church.

Father Oriol was driven from his church; but he remained in the parish and said Mass in the chapel of the castle. This was a great consolation. As no one wished to lend him even the worst chasuble, he had to make one out of inferior material. This vestment is made of pink and white striped material. During the days of the Terror and those scarcely less terrible ones which followed, this chasuble was used at all secret Masses said by Father Oriol and the Archbishop of Vienne, Monsignor d'Aviau, the admirable shepherd who was not afraid to expose his life for his flock.

Father Oriol, like all faithful priests, was soon driven from the country, as he had been driven from his church. Mourning was intense at Lupé when on September 24, 1792, he had to leave not only his parish but France, abandoning the sheep to the wolf. At first, he chose Savoy as his place of exile, then Italy, when the victorious armies forced him to go further. Some days later, on October 20, an inventory was taken in the convent. The fictitious sale saved the house and permitted the Sisters to remain there as guests of the owners. Forced to remove their religious habit, they devoted themselves with all their souls to a prudent apostolate which rendered much service to the priests and to the faithful.

The departure of Father Oriol had been a victory for the apostate priest, but the faithful refused his services. Those who had accepted him for one reason or another, felt remorse and returned to the Catholic priests, the only ones in whom they had confidence. A note written in 1800 by Father Oriol tells us: "No one died in schism in this parish." Those who died, assisted by a true Catholic priest, blessed the prudent, visible angels who brought God's ministers to their bedside, and I think that this service was often rendered by the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

The rage of the persecutors ever increasing, the constitutional religion itself was forbidden in Lupé as in other places. The Sisters then had the sorrow of seeing the church deprived of its real use and the tabernacle empty. The apostate priest, Castellan, remained, however, in the rectory; but on January 12, 1794, he handed over his priestly credentials and renounced his priesthood. On July 20, 1796, the rectory was sold.

On July 1, 1797, the laws seeming more lenient, Archbishop d'Aviau permitted Father Oriol to return to his parish and thought that he himself would be able to go back to his episcopal city of Vienne. He had hardly arrived there when he had "to cross the Rhone and look for refuge in his parishes bordering on Mont Pilatus." It was at that time that he came to Lupé where he found only the "chasuble of persecution" for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries.

Father Oriol writes: "How many Masses were said at night, in the houses, in the barns and in the stables of this vicinity with a pewter chalice and this poor chasuble, which I was happy to find on my return from Italy. Monsignor d'Aviau, who died Archbishop of Bordeaux, returned with me and took refuge under an incognito. We used this chasuble."

The presence of the priest and the prelate was very consoling to the hearts of the Religious and the faithful, but it was of short duration. The persecution was renewed on September 4. The malice that never failed to denounce those who "crossed the Rhone" marked the Archbishop as a resident of Lupé.

Father Oriol was influential and consequently suspected. It was the danger he incurred that retarded his return to his parish until the middle of 1797. He had been back five months when, on December 6, toward midnight, the Revolutionists came to take him with Father Malgontier, of Maclas, to the prison of Condrieu, then to the prison of Vienne and finally to that of Roanne. A letter from Father Oriol tells us that he was not alone in the rectory when the revolutionary brigade came to arrest him. The faithful continued to assemble at night around their priests to pray and to be instructed. We find proof of it in the paragraph taken from a letter written in the prison.

"You, whom zeal to be instructed in your religion had snatched from sleep, have seen how I have been attacked and dragged for Jesus Christ, my Divine Master." In fact, in the castle of Lupé, today occupied by the Religious of Saint Joseph, one sees, near the portal, an enormous chestnut tree; and tradition relates that the inhabitants of the city saw a priest fastened firmly to this tree during the night of December 6. They did not know whether it was Father Oriol or Father Malgontier. The first, carried away forcibly, was waiting there when the second arrived; and the sentence quoted above makes us believe that it was Father Oriol who was fastened to the tree.

We know from the manuscript that Archbishop d'Aviau was at Lupé on October 23, and that he was not there on December 6. There are documentary proofs. On the reverse of a permission given to Father Caillet to bless a marriage, Father Oriol wrote: "His Lordship, the Archbishop was present here on October 23, 1797."

On another document: "Fortunately this holy prelate was no longer here on December 6, when I was arrested and put into prison with Father Malgontier. On February 11, 1798, we were liberated above Tarare."

The following is what had happened after the imprisonment: Thanks to a kindness, Father Oriol was able, after his arrival in Lyons, to write a touching letter in which he recommended to his parishioners to love one another, to pray for those who made them suffer and for those who helped them.

In another letter, dated January 28, 1798, Father Oriol entrusted François Vincent, former steward of the Mayol family, with several commissions. He placed the relics and reliquaries of the church in the care of the Sisters. He told François Vincent to take from his personal effects whatever he wanted and to give the remainder to his family. He added in a postscript: "If there is anything which might please the Sisters, I hope my relatives will not refuse to give it to them." This letter is the testament of the holy priest who was awaiting death. God, however, decided otherwise.

Fathers Oriol and Malgontier were condemned to deportation to the unhealthy islands of French Guiana. They departed, on February 11, with Fathers Dulac, Vial and Mazenod. A cart took them away under the guard of a detachment of police. The convoy halted at Tarare, and the people learned that these priests were directed to Rochefort, whence they would depart for Guiana. In those sad times there was always and everywhere someone on the watch to render services to the prisoners, in whom they took an interest without knowing them.

Those, who were resigned, helped the others to submit joyfully to their fate. At once, the word was passed from parish to parish. These priests must be freed and for that it was necessary to lie in ambush, armed with guns. Father Monternot relates the incident:

> "On Sexagesima Sunday, a troop of twenty or twenty-five police and soldiers were conducting five Catholic priests whom the Directory of Lyons was sending to Rochefort. Having arrived between the Sauvages and Machézal above Tarare, at the place called *la Chapelle,* the soldiers were encompassed by two or three hundred armed young men who had come from the neighboring parishes to liberate the captives. Notice was given to set the priests at liberty. The soldiers refused; and one of them turning his gun toward the prisoners, fired the shots which killed Father Dulac and wounded Father Oriol in the face. The latter bore the scar until his death. All the priests were wounded except Father Malgontier. The young men felled the assassin with two shots, killed four soldiers and wounded many others. They buried Father Dulac's body in Tarare and gave liberty to his confreres." [2]

To punish this uprising five hundred soldiers left Lyons, and the mountains of Tarare were given up to pillage. Two of the young men were guillotined in Lyons and the parishes of Amplepuis, Ronno, Sauvages, Saint-Apolinaire and Valsonne had to unite to pay a tribute of thirty thousand francs.

Father Oriol did not return to Lupé after his liberation. He did not go far, however. He retired to the home of his brother-in-law in Columbier, where he celebrated Mass at night, and once in a great while secretly visited Lupé.

While all these serious events were taking place, there was hardly a question of the Religious. These apostolic souls worked with so great discretion, prudence, modesty and humility that no one heard of it, and this silence is much to their credit. To act and keep silence were the first duties of the Religious, particularly at that time when walls had ears. The Sisters warned the priests or had them warned of danger that threatened them, of the refuge to which they could go, of baptisms to be administered, of marriages to be blessed and of the dying to receive the Last Sacraments. How many children they instructed in their duties. What help and consolation they brought to the sick.

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[2] M. Monternot: *Yves Alexandre de Marbeuf.* Lardanchet, Lyon, p, 352.

The Religious guarded the Blessed Sacrament, carried It from place to place when prudence demanded, or kept It on themselves in certain cases. The Sisters very often presided at the religious assembly in the absence of the priest. They directed the prayers, but not the hymns, because the people must not be heard. They had the spiritual reading and, on Sundays, announced the feasts and fasts prescribed by the Church. The Religious had a vast field for their apostolate in those times of persecution, but they had to move silently through this field.

If we relate sad events of those woeful times, while writing the history of Mother Saint John, it is because these events were a part of her real life. The inmost life of each one of us is made up of our own joys and sufferings as well as the joys and sufferings of those whom nature and grace have made our own.

Although, apparently, some convents were less troubled than others, it is none the less true that all suffered a real passion during these years of trial. The passion of the Sisters of Lupé was made more and more sorrowful by many circumstances that are unknown to us and which, from 1790 to 1800, filled their days with bitterness. During this long agony, some Catholic priests, like consoling angels, gave, in passing, a little comfort to those souls deprived of spiritual help. These priests were only passers-by. They had to change their names and place of residence many times between September 4, 1797, and November 9, 1799.

In 1800, the Sisters had the consolation of seeing Father Oriol residing in his parish. He was there on December 14, of that year, the date of the death of the first Superior of the community of Lupé, Sister Marie Anne Tardy, one of the four foundresses. "The next day," writes Father Oriol, "as the churches were not yet opened to religious exercises, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the obsequies for the dead were celebrated in the room where the Sister had died. Her body was buried in the parish cemetery, in the presence of the Sisters and a great number of people. The young girls whom she had taught and formed to piety were dressed in white. In the height of the persecution, this virtuous Sister had so well gained the respect of everybody that the most wicked who respected nothing, esteemed her. She was constant in the Faith and true to her holy vocation in the different trials to which she, her companions and other virtuous people had been subjected."

Father Oriol exercised his priestly duties secretly and, at times, publicly, until 1802. Archbishop d'Aviau was again in Lupé on November 28, 1801, and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to more than three hundred people. The next day, he confirmed more than twelve hundred in Maclas. Religion was reborn as if by enchantment on the ruins of the Revolution.

The Concordat, which gave peace to the Church, suppressed the Archdiocese of Vienne, and Lupé became part of the Diocese of Lyons. Its church, which had not been sold, was reopened. The rectory, repurchased by a good Catholic, was given to the commune which placed it at the service of the parish priest. The people furnished whatever was necessary and religious services were resumed.

The castle had not been sold. The Mayol family was authorized to resume possession of its property. Jacques Joseph de Mayol, Lord of Lupé, died there on February 25, 1807, and left his property and title to Father Auguste Marie Christophe de Mayol who inherited all the kindly dispositions of his family toward the parish.

The Sisters had died one after the other. In 1815, the community counted twelve members. Of the twelve, only Sister Blandina was a Religious. The others were pious, devout women who had come to join the Sisters, but circumstances had not permitted them to bind themselves by the vows of religion. Since that was possible now, they desired to be Sisters of Saint Joseph.

Father Oriol and Father de Mayol resolved to restore this community by introducing what the world called "the reform," that is to say, to place it under the authority of a Superior General, in affiliating it with the motherhouse that was being organized in Lyons. These two priests submitted this important business to the Archbishop, when the Sisters were transferring the novitiate from Micarême to the Chartreux. Mother Saint John favorably received the request of Father Bochard; but she was too busy and too preoccupied with the organization of the central house to go to Lupé herself.

She sent Mother Elizabeth Noailly to study the situation. Mother Elizabeth acquitted herself of the mission with great wisdom. Judging that the age and infirmities of Sister Blandina would permit no changes in the routine of her life, she left her as Superior for the young women who were with her. Two of these, who were very pious and of great promise, were taken to the "Grand Novitiate." After the customary probation, they returned to Lupé for the reception of the holy habit.

On the occasion of this ceremony, Father Oriol and Father de Mayol gave a retreat to the entire parish and on December 27, 1815, the feast of Saint John the Evangelist, the parish priest solemnly gave the religious habit to Jeanne Claudine Hugand of Ville-sur-Jarnioux, Rhone, and to Marguerite Pessonneau of Lupé. The first received the name of Sister Saint Joseph; the second, Sister Saint John. On October 18, 1817, in the same church, these two Sisters made their profession in the presence of Father de Mayol of Lupé.

One after the other, the postulants of Lupé went to Lyons to make their novitiate in the cloister of the Chartreux until the time when they could be received into the large buildings of the motherhouse. Sister Blandina died in 1822. Sister Saint Joseph Hugand was appointed Superior and governed the house wisely for thirty-six years.

Father de Mayol loved this community. He proved it by selling to it, at a nominal price, the family castle and the property of Sal-Croix, in order that the work of the Religious might be better accomplished. The Sisters abandoned the house they had occupied for a boys' school, reserving only a workroom on the ground floor. It is in this castle that we find them today.

At present, there is at Lupé only a public school which has very few pupils. One is quite surprised to learn, by means of different documents, what vitality these schools formerly had. The Brothers had under their direction not only the free school, but a large boarding-school as well. On certain occasions, the pupils presented, for their parents, entertainments in which they took great pleasure. We possess several dramas composed by Father Oriol.

The Sisters, too, had a day-school, a boarding-school and an infant school. Lupé and the neighboring parishes maintained an excellent reputation for their classes. The glorious past of Lupé is buried under sectarian laws. When will the restoration come? God grant it may be soon.

CHAPTER VIII

CHARLOTTE DUPIN, HEROINE

GOD enlightened Mother Saint John with His spirit, imbued her with His strength and communicated His wisdom to her. Kind without weakness, firm without severity, prudent and, at the same time, broad in her valuations, she directed everything with weight and moderation. Her great and amiable virtue attracted souls. Her experience excited their confidence, and her admirable spirit of discernment distinguished the action of grace in the midst of the miseries, weaknesses and eccentricities of human nature. She made the best of everything. It might have been said that she resembled a bee drawing sweet juice from bitter plants. She could judge, understand and love. In a word, she was what the Saviour said of the saint whose name she bore: "An ardent, shining light in the house of God." She knew very well that authority must join kindness and gentleness with force, in order to be a faithful image of that God from whom authority comes.

Mother Saint John had been in the cloister of the Chartreux for more than two years when, in 1819, she received a visit from one who was called "Pious Juliand." She came, asking to be received as a daughter and to be permitted to place under the care of the congregation all the prisoners of the city whom she had taken under her protection. This was a new work proposed to the charitable Mother,—a work which did not have to be organized since the Terror had begotten it. It had rendered a great deal of service, and was destined to render still more; but it was a secular work, and secular works which demand the complete giving of oneself, never exist long, because of the numerous family obligations that thwart them. The work of the prisons, in order to continue, required the assistance of a religious congregation; and this coöperation was asked of the Institute of Saint Joseph, at the suggestion of the Archbishop.

Mother Saint John consulted God; and, after prayer and meditation, accepted, putting into application the pious maxims of the holy founder: "In your enterprises, take care that God alone be the principle and the end. In the conduct of zeal, which will be the guiding principle of your profession, imitate those who are most zealous and embrace in desire the salvation and perfection of the whole world, with a spirit full of a generous courage which will urge you to be willing to do all and to suffer and undertake all for the advancement of God's glory and the salvation of your dear fellow creatures."

The work of the prisons is not explicitly anticipated in the Rule, but it is there implicitly. This Rule wishes that the Sisters always have before their eyes the end of their vocation which is very sublime. The aim is double: to give to God the greatest possible glory and to help one's neighbor, no matter who the neighbor may be without regard to his name, rank, race, good qualities, faults, religion or country. The neighbor, to whom the Religious of Saint Joseph must open her heart and give her devotion, is the whole human race. These prisoners are a part of humanity. Since the prisoners needed her, Mother Saint John accepted this apostolate, from which were to come the community of Rue Victor Hugo, the Maison de la Solitude, the work of the "Peigneuses" (combers) and "Veilleuses" (watchers) in the hospitals, and the new Congregation of Marie-Joseph.

At the height of the Terror, when even the dungeons were crowded with innocent victims, a priest of Ainay and his servant, Charlotte Dupin, were arrested and confined in a prison of Lyons called the "Prison of Roanne." Charlotte Dupin, whose crime consisted in being the priest's servant, did not remain long under lock and key. This short time was sufficient to teach her that hunger, cold, and fear existed in the prison. Her kind heart did not forget. When she had been given her liberty, she thought of comforting those who were still in prison and whose captivity she had shared.

The jailers deeming her simple, insignificant and inoffensive, permitted her to see her friends. In the beginning, some time elapsed between the visits; then she made them oftener, and, finally, she went every day. The prison authorities were no longer uneasy about her comings and goings, as these interviews were not followed by any disorder such as attempt to escape.

The time she did not use for visiting the prisoners was spent in begging for them. As soon as she had gathered the objects which seemed necessary, she came to the prison bending under the weight. To some, who had not the means to procure their meals, she brought food; to others, particularly those who felt the dampness, she brought clothes and coverings; to those whom fortune had accustomed to comforts, she brought dainties; to others, she brought news of their families, their friends, their parish, their city; and she brought joy to everybody.

Charlotte Dupin also brought God to these prisoners. Father Linsolas, Vicar General and administrator of the diocese, used the liberty given to this good woman by confiding several times to her Sacred Hosts which he commissioned her to bring to the imprisoned. Charlotte acquitted herself of the mission confided to her with respect and admirable piety. The priest, who received from her hands the little box containing his God, felt a celestial happiness when giving Communion to himself and to the other prisoners.

The jailers, who saw Charlotte every day, talked freely with her. She learned the names of those whose executions were decreed, and the day and hour the condemned ones would mount the guillotine. She notified their families. She told the priests, who would be able to absolve the condemned as they passed them. She acquainted the condemned with the place where they could prudently exchange a last farewell with their relatives. Charlotte brought the prisoners' messages to the outer world and carried back the answers. What secret services she rendered! One can imagine the murmur of joy on her arrival. This humble woman, in spite of the diversity of her mission, sometimes sinister, was, we may say, the bearer of happiness.

Roanne was not the only prison in Lyons. There was suffering in the other prisons also. Charlotte was deeply grieved because she was not able to go to all the prisons. She then had the idea of making proselytes. She had her sister at first. Soon, other women, poor like themselves, came to offer their services. It was no small undertaking to visit and assist all those confined in the prisons of Roanne, Saint Joseph, the Recluses, and in the cellars of the Town Hall. These admirable women divided the work. Some went every Sunday to beg at the homes of their more fortunate neighbors, for they were poor and had to work during the week. Sunday is a day of rest, but, for these good and valiant hearts, the rest consisted in gathering here and there a little comfort for their unhappy brethren.

All the gifts collected by these people on Sunday, were stored in a little room of the porter's lodge in Rue Vaubecour. Charlotte and her sister, assisted by a few companions somewhat more favored with the goods of the world, spent the entire week distributing these articles in the prisons. Thus in 1795, without any advertising, without any noise, a benevolent society was organized. It was called the Society of the Charlottes in honor of the foundress.

Soon, the room in Rue Vaubecour was too small. The charitable Madame Delphin helped the Charlottes to procure a larger one. The society was transferred to Rue Sala, in the interior of the ground floor of Maison Maupetit. The collections and distributions continued until the end of the Revolution. Once peace was restored, the prisons were emptied and there remained only criminals under custody.

As it enters into the Divine plan to perform a part of His works by means of His creatures, the Charlottes and others were imbued with this idea: to ease the physical anguish of those who suffer through their own fault and, in this way, to bring them back to Him, from Whom they had separated themselves. That is the whole secret of the vocation of the prisons. Charlotte Dupin had that vocation. She used her heart and her life in it; and, without any preconceived plan or any of the qualities of an organizer, she placed on a good footing an organization that counted at her death more than fifty members whom France would soon need.

In 1805, Pius VII consented to go to France to anoint the Emperor in Paris. His passage to Lyons was a veritable triumph. Cardinal Fesch had neglected nothing in order that the reception at his return be as magnificent as that at the setting out. The program included a drive along the Saône that the Pope might see the surroundings of the city.

> "The Holy Father came out of the Cardinal's residence about three o'clock, accompanied by his entire suite. He rode in the imperial carriage to Port Neuville. His Lordship explained the beautiful sites, the delightful villas, the Roman remains and Gallic monuments that could be seen here and there on the slopes. As the azure ribbon of the Saône unfolded itself to view, the Pope exclaimed: 'Beautiful! Beautiful!'
>
> "The Cardinal called the attention of His Holiness to the increasing multitude of the faithful. 'Behold, Holy Father, it is as in the time of the Saviour, people followed him in crowds to the shores of the Sea of Tiberias.' The Pope answered: 'How good your Lyonnais are. As long as we live we will remember their faith and their love.' On the return from this drive, Pius VII reopened the sanctuary of Fourvière which had been closed and sold during the Revolution." [1]

On the same day, April 16, 1805, when these marvelous festivities were taking place, a funeral procession directed its way, without any pomp, through the streets of the city to the cemetery of Loyasse. It was the funeral of Charlotte Dupin. Her devotion of every day had used up her strength and, bent under the weight of fatigues, she passed to her eternal reward. There was no crowd at her funeral. One priest accompanied with respect to its last resting-place the remains of her who had assisted so many priests and other victims of human passions. We believe that while on earth the Lyonnais acclaimed the Sovereign Pontiff, in the celestial city the angels and saints acclaimed the humble servant of the prisoners who had never suspected her greatness.

[1] Mgr. Ricard: *Le Cardinal Fesch.*

Charlotte Dupin was no longer on earth, but it was decided that the work of the Charlottes must live. Jeanne Louise Juliand was appointed to replace the humble foundress. The work had existed from day to day. Under the sole impulse of her heart, Charlotte thought daily of stretching out her hands, —one, to receive; the other, to give. To comfort today without thinking of tomorrow. A good soul, but she was not provident.

Jeanne Juliand was a different type. She thought at once of placing the work on a solid foundation in order to assure its continuance. She drew up firm, precise rules. She called all the associates to a general meeting. Some of these persons could give time to the work only on Sundays; others but a few hours during the week; while still others could devote themselves entirely to it. This was the case with Mesdemoiselles Juliand, Duplex and others. The tasks were distributed according to each one's abilities, after the strength and time at the disposal of the members had been ascertained.

The work was now well known in the city. The priests, whom the charitable women had formerly helped and who had escaped death, spoke of them to different families. The gifts testified the sympathy of which these good women were the object and the society enjoyed an era of prosperity.

During the wars of the Empire, the prisoners arrived by the thousands in Lyons. They were crowded into all the prisons of the city, to the great detriment of the health of these unfortunate ones. The Charlottes hastened to their aid; they multiplied themselves, but they were not sufficient for the work. God sent assistance to them. These people came from all ranks and all classes of society. Rich and poor, working-women and great ladies placed themselves indiscriminately at the service of the prisoners. No one spared herself. This permitted the easing of the lot of thousands of soldiers.

In 1811, for several weeks, the Charlottes distributed, daily, four thousand portions of soup to the prisoners. This soup was not distributed in one place. It had to be taken to the prisons. As the prisons were scattered in all parts of the city, these good women had to go through the streets, carrying, in pairs, heavy, steaming kettles of soup.

One scourge never comes alone. The crowding, the vitiated air and the lack of cleanliness brought about an epidemic of typhus fever in the Commanderie next to Saint George's Church. At once, the Charlottes placed themselves at the bedside of the sick, and very great ladies braved the danger. One very distinguished woman, the wife of Doctor Dartigues, was the victim of her devotion. Her son, worthy of her, later established the parish of Saint Blandina in Perrache.

The Empire crumbled in 1814. The only prisoner of war was the "Eagle" chained by the English on the Island of Saint Helena. The raging waves that served as his jailer did not permit the Charlottes to bring him any help. Then there was quite a change in their work. The auxiliaries of circumstances withdrew and the ladies of the world contented themselves with giving their money. Jeanne Juliand was not surprised. She was grateful for their generosity. Money is a great help. No doubt, one cannot do without it; but giving of oneself is still much more, and the one does not replace the other.

Jeanne Juliand realized that secular help was indispensable, but that it would not suffice. People in the world have duties toward their families. It was difficult for them to give constant coöperation. As the needs were for every day and every hour of the day, it was necessary to enlist the help of the Sisters. Jeanne Juliand was so convinced of this that she went to the Archbishop to make known her desire and that of her companions to have their statutes approved, and their modest society transformed into a congregation. The Archbishop approved and encouraged the idea of a religious life, but rejected that of a new congregation. The Charlottes were advised to affiliate themselves with the Congregation of Saint Joseph.

It was then that Mademoiselle Juliand went to the Chartreux to confer with Mother Saint John. The work proposed was quite different from that to which the Institute had devoted itself up to that time; but, as it concerned the good of souls, and since Mademoiselle Juliand was sent by those who were enlightened by grace, Mother Saint John did not refuse her request. Jeanne Juliand and Mademoiselle Duplex entered the novitiate. Their companions continued temporarily the work which was not to be interrupted.

The time of the novitiate was passed with very great fervor. At the reception of the habit, Mademoiselle Juliand received the name of Sister Saint Anne and Mademoiselle Duplex that of Sister Saint Polycarp. After their profession, both returned to their dear prisoners and their companions went to learn the duties of the religious life in the Novitiate of the Chartreux.

Among the Charlottes, some did not have a vocation to the religious life, but desired to continue taking part in the work. Mother Saint John decided that they be admitted as associates. They were given a uniform and assigned special work. Every morning some of them could be seen going out in white apron, sleeves and cap, a bag or large basket on their arms. They went thus, accompanied by a Sister, to the large markets of the city. The costume permitted them to be recognized and this facilitated their task. The Charlottes received a welcome everywhere and the poorest shopkeeper gave his offering.

The Sunday assistants, all working-women, went through the city and brought back to the house the products of their begging,—food, clothing and shoes. In the fruit seasons, collections outside the city were organized; and the imprisoned had an extra feast which they appreciated very much.

The Sisters continued busying themselves indiscriminately with the men and women detained in the prisons of Roanne, of Saint Joseph and of the Recluses; and the kettle still played its part in their nourishment. For more than forty years the Charlottes could be seen carrying the prisoners' kettle between them in the streets of Lyons.

Mother Saint Anne had been placed as Superior in Rue Sala. She soon succeeded in saving money that enabled her to buy property at the corner of Rue Saint Hélène and Rue Bourbon, today 27 Rue Victor Hugo, between Bellecour and Perrache. On this land, she had the house built in which the Sisters of Saint Joseph still live. The deed of sale is dated

October 15, 1822. It bears the names Jeanne Louise Juliand, Benoîte Goy and Marie Aimée Brun. In 1824, the community left Rue Sala and took possession of the new property. This land had been bought and the house had been built with the money obtained from the collections. The community did not wish people to think they considered this property as belonging to them. On December 16, 1824, the three proprietors of the estate made a gift of it to the Archbishop of Lyons, on condition that it serve as a home for the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

Mother Saint Anne continued putting her whole heart into her work, which did not quite lose its original character as a work of charity, because of gifts daily renewed. The Charlottes continued to leave the house with their bags and baskets. The associates received a new mission. Every Sunday, some of them went to the hospital to wash, comb and comfort the sick. They brought them little dainties, read pious books, spoke consoling words to them and, in many ways, tried to ease their sufferings.

Thus the Sisters of Saint Joseph had created the work of the "Peigneuses" and the "Veilleuses" of the Hôtel-Dieu of Lyons. The community of Rue Victor Hugo was the cradle of this work. The administration of the hospital has not forgotten it. Every year the Superior of Rue Victor Hugo receives a letter inviting the Sisters to go to the annual Mass for the success of the work and they always attend.

Mother Saint Anne had another plan. Some of the prisoners who were paying the penalty for their crimes had children. These poor little creatures aroused the compassion of the charitable Mother. To ease the lot of these little daughters of the unfortunate, she brought them into the house and established for them a "providence" which functioned until 1848, when the Revolutionary hordes plundered the house and forced the Sisters to suppress the home. Nineteen years later, a new providence was opened in this house.

While Mother Saint Anne was busy with collections, auxiliaries and prisoners' children, Mother Saint Polycarp was in charge of the interior of the city prisons. Since there were no longer any political prisoners or prisoners of war, the temporary prisons were closed; but there still remained in Lyons, the prison Roanne quite near the Mother Church, the prison Saint Joseph in Rue Auvergne and the prison of the Recluses in Rue de la Charité. The Sisters of Saint Joseph had the care of the last prison for a long time. Before the Revolution, the space actually comprised between Rue de la Charité, Rue Auguste Comte, Rue Sala and Rue François-Dauphin was occupied by two penitentiaries, one directed by the Religious of the Visitation of Bellecour, the other by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The first bore the name of "Filles-Pénitentes"; the second, "Maison des Recluses." The Historical Almanac of the city of Lyons gives us information about these two houses. We read in that of 1745:

> "The establishment of the house 'Filles-Pénitentes' situated in Rue Auguste Comte, was founded in 1651, and registered in Parliament by *letters patent* and approved on December 20 of the same year by Cardinal Richelieu, Archbishop of Lyons. The Religious of the Blessed Virgin Mary have the spiritual direction of the house. They receive young girls who have been disorderly in their conduct, and whose families give them a dowry which is managed by the directors and administrators of the temporal affairs. It is agreed with the relatives of these girls that they remain there for life whether in health or sickness. It is a house of correction, where the greater number of those placed there, become Religious at the end of some years and after a long trial."

The Historical Almanac of 1755 tells us about the second house:

> "The 'Maison des Recluses' is destined for the correction of women and girls of bad lives. It owes its origin to the zeal of the citizens of the last century who formed the project of enclosing them, in order to stop their disorderly lives and to try to bring them back to work and virtue. The *letters patent* which authorize this establishment are dated January, 1710. They were registered by the Parliament of Paris on September 5, 1725. This house is subject to the orders of the Archbishop for the spiritual, and to

those of His Highness, the Governor or the Lord Commander, in his absence, for the temporal. It is ruled by a board composed of several lay and ecclesiastical administrators. These, by their regulations, can neither directly nor indirectly solicit the entrance or exit of the recluses. The latter are placed under the direction of ten ladies of Saint Joseph. Provisions have been made for the complete separation of the recluses who are disposed to be converted, from the more perverse."

The Sisters of Saint Joseph and the Nuns of the Visitation had originally the same kind of work; but with the former were placed the girls whose relatives could not bear the expenses of the detention; with the latter, those whose relatives could do so.

"The house of 'Filles-Pénitentes' and the 'Maison des Recluses' had originally but one common chapel under the title 'Saint Madeleine,' which occupied the site of the small present nave of Saint Francis de Sales Church on Rue François-Dauphin. In 1690, the first chapel of Saint Madeleine was replaced by a building with the same title, constructed in the form of a 'T,' whose principal part, corresponding to the large present nave of Saint Francis de Sales Church, was open to the public, and whose two arms were reserved, the one on the right, separated from the sanctuary by barred grates, for the Recluses; the other, on the left, for the Filles-Pénitentes. Today the two arms of the 'T' are: the first, the chapel of the Blessed Virgin; the second, the nave on Rue François-Dauphin.

"During the Revolution, the Lyonnais remained faithful. Since they were not able to frequent the churches which had been given over to the schismatic clergy, they had adopted some chapels, that of the Filles-Pénitentes being among the number. The citizens who were excited against them by the unions went to the services and were prodigal of insults and violence. Mayor Vitel, instead of dealing harshly with the disturbers, made a pretext of these disorders to close the chapels used by Catholics.

"The 'Maison des Recluses,' then transformed into a prison, became one of the numerous Bastiles raised in France during the Revolution. Numbers of Lyonnais were imprisoned there and the greater part came out of it to mount the guillotine or to be shot.

This prison was the theater of an atrocious scene on May 4, 1795, at the time of the reaction in Lyons against the excesses of the members of the National Convention. The people rebelled against the authors of so many crimes which had decimated families; and, uttering cries of vengeance, forced the doors of the prisons and massacred forty-two of the Jacobins who were imprisoned there."[2]

After the Concordat, on the site of the enlarged chapel arose the church of the new parish of Saint Francis de Sales, a name which recalls the memory of the saintly bishop who died at the age of fifty-six in the gardener's house of the Visitation Monastery of Bellecour. The building of the Filles-Pénitentes became the rectory and served later as a parochial school.

A fact worthy of note is that the Charlottes had replaced the Sisters of Saint Joseph in the prison of the Recleuses and now the Sisters replaced the Charlottes. The building was then transformed into a military prison and the community of Rue Victor Hugo was given charge of this "penitentiary." The picturesquely modest battalions of the Charlottes disappeared.

Mother Saint Anne devoted herself to this work until 1831. She was an ardent person, whom nothing repulsed. One day, entering a café, she begged for her prison. Instead of opening his purse, a young man slapped her. "That is very good for me," she said, "but my soldiers do not depend on that," and she remained immovable, seeming to wait for an alms. The young man, surprised and confused, gave her some money. She received, from Heaven, the reward of her devotion on November 22, 1831. Her memory will never be forgotten in the community.

Neither will the Sisters ever forget Mother Saint Irénée Goy, co-foundress of the house. She became Superior in 1839. "Under her intelligent, wise direction," the archives of the community tell us, "all prospered in the spiritual domain, as well as in the temporal." Her dear prisoners were the object of her solicitude. The military administration realized it, and expressed its thanks through the pen of General de Castellane. In 1867, she had the sorrow of seeing the soldiers taken away. A decree of the Ministry submitted the penitentiary directly to the military administration. Mother Saint Irénée died on March 18, 1868, one year after the military prisoners had been taken away. The Sisters still retain the care of the chapel in the penitentiary.

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[2] J. B. Martin, Docteur de l'Université de Lyon: *Histoire des Églises et Chapelles.* Vol. I, p. 97.

❀ CHAPTER IX ❀

FOR THOSE IN BONDAGE

IN 1762, after the malicious attacks of the Jansenists, Gallicans and Philosophers, the Company of Jesus was suppressed for the time being. In Bellecour, the Jesuits possessed an establishment called the "professed house," in which they had a novitiate facing Rue Auvergne. It was this novitiate which became the prison "Saint Joseph," where Mother Saint Polycarp lavished her devotion on its prisoners of both sexes who were confined there.

The chaplain of this prison, Father Besson, had met some truly interesting souls among the young women prisoners. If they had done wrong, it was because they did not know the good; and, since they had discovered the sweetness and charm of virtue, they were attached to it. Knowing the world and the dangers that awaited them there, these poor women were seized with fright at the thought of their freedom. Their misfortune was in not having any family or, what was still worse, in being obliged to live in the midst of an unworthy one.

The prudent chaplain understood these terrors. He felt, then, for these sheep, who, in a short time, would fall again among wolves. He knew that he must protect them from danger; and he begged his confreres to come to his assistance. Aided by their alms, in 1812 he rented a small apartment in Rue Puits d'Ainay and brought there six of these young women whom he placed under the direction of a Sister of Saint Joseph. The latter found work for them, thus providing for their support. Others who were freed came to join these six. Soon there were so many that the house was too small.

People of means interested themselves in this work of rescue. M. Baboin de la Barollière, a distinguished Lyonnais, bought, in the name of Sisters Duplex, Flachard, Duplan and Roquet, a house in a retired part of Montauban, and gave it as a shelter for the penitents. The Lyonnais charity completed the liberality. Other gifts permitted the buying of looms, spindles and land around the house. The property, admirably located on the slope of Fourvière, was quite suitable. The Virgin, enthroned on the summit, watched over these rescued sheep. Nothing disturbed the peace of the place. They called it *The Solitude,* and in 1824, the young women were transferred there.

Mother Saint Polycarp was appointed Superior of this house. She came to live there with the Sisters mentioned above. The prisons were not neglected, but this work, which was the complement, assumed great proportions. Soon more than one hundred penitents peopled *The Solitude,* and the requests were always increasing. Soul and body were well cared for in this sojourn of peace. Work, prayer, pure, holy and healthy joy made virtue easier every day. No one was there through force. Honest homes were formed for these regenerated souls, when they felt themselves strong enough, either to return to their families or to be placed in Christian workshops.

With a maternal eye filled with interest, Mother Saint John followed the progress of these works which were complementary one to the other. She admired her daughters, but she was uneasy about the crushing labor that devolved on each one. She understood that, though the formation given in the Novitiate of the Chartreux was excellent for the Sisters engaged in teaching or in the care of the sick, it was not perfectly adapted to the care of prisoners. Another training was needed for this very different work.

With the consent of Archbishop de Pins it was resolved that the Sisters would open at 29 Chemin de Montauban, near *The Solitude,* in newly constructed buildings, a special novitiate where aspirants who felt themselves called to this work might be trained in the religious life. As a consequence, by virtue of her title of Superior, Mother Saint Polycarp was named "Provincial of the Division of the Prisons," but always under the obedience of the Superior General of the Chartreux. With all necessary liberty for initiative, they left her the entire responsibility of this novitiate and the work for which it had been created. This innovation was so much the more opportune as the needs manifested were very great. Until 1824, the Sisters of Saint Joseph were concerned only with the prisoners of Lyons. In October, 1824, at the request of the Municipal Council of Montbrison, some Sisters were sent for its prison. About the same time Villefranche-sur-Saône made a similar request, offering the Sisters a home in the prison.

This permanent residence seemed to Mother Saint John and to Mother Saint Polycarp a great advantage for the prisoners. The Sisters could help these unfortunate people at night. During the day, they could watch over their needs and, by soothing their moral sufferings, render easier the task of consoling them and bringing them back to God. Mother Saint Polycarp went to these places to examine the situation. The good Mother did not expect to make a triumphal entrance into the prisons. She knew too well the mentality of those who lived there and the prejudices this type of people harbored against those who wore the religious habit.

It often happened that she was received with insults and threats. This did not annoy her. The Sister who accompanied her said that she often asked the guard to remove momentarily the chains which hurt the prisoners. Then, on her knees, she removed the worms, dressed the wounds, lifted the poor sore feet and wrapped them carefully with the white linen that she had brought. These sullen hearts, which did not know the workings of Christian charity, were amazed and very often repented. The relief resulting from these charitable visits soon made them desired; and a touching confidence was sometimes established between the prisoner and the one who had brought a little sunshine into his heart. It must have been thus in the prison of Villefranche, for one of the prisoners, in gratitude, painted the portrait of Mother Saint Polycarp. When it was finished, he wrote on the back of the canvas:

"Elizabeth Duplex"

"Born in Lyons, on August 17, 1780. She commenced the work of the prisons on October 15, 1807, and entered the convent of

Saint Joseph, where she received the habit and the name, Sister Saint Polycarp. She was the first Provincial of the Sisters of Saint Joseph for the Prisons.

> "Mother of orphans, mother of the unfortunate,
> Model of virtue, her kind beneficence
> Alleviates the sufferings of the poor prisoners
> And transforms a place of horror into a haven of happiness."
>
> By an inmate of the Prison of Villefranche, 1829.

In 1830, a large prison was built in Perrache with the name of the one that it replaced. On June 16, 1831, the prisoners were transferred to the new "Prison Saint Joseph," which was divided into two very distinct and separate sections. A suitable home for the Sisters was arranged there. This prison was for the women only. Mother Saint Augustine Quinon was appointed Superior. The Refuge and the Novitiate were developing in an admirable manner, both spiritually and materially. The liberality of the Lyonnais never relaxed and the grace of God fell abundantly on the house and on those who lived in it.

We have said that the devotion of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, at first exercised only in the prisons of Lyons, had gone beyond the city. Everywhere their influence had produced such improvements that the Supervisory Commission was struck by it and conceived the project of prison reform. It drew up a report which was printed and addressed to the Minister of the Interior. This report, quite full of praise for the Sisters of Saint Joseph, gave an unexpected expansion to the work of the prisons.

Here are a few quotations from the report:

"The reform of the prisons is the thought of our time. So unanimous an interest in any question had never before engrossed our minds, and with good reason; for, as had been said, all the principles of politics and humanity, all the experiences and observations of those who are versed in the science of prisons tend to prove that the interests of society are deeply enlisted in the question. The points to which I am more especially charged to call your attention today are:

"1. The chapter relative to the Commission, to its prerogatives, to the nature and extent of the mission confided to it.

"2. The entire introduction of the religious element, represented by the Brothers and Sisters, belonging to corporations instituted especially for the service of the prisons.

"The interior service of the prisons of Lyons is confided to Brothers for the men's department, and to Sisters for the women's section. This service is still incomplete, as it is in the trial stage. This experiment has produced, however, in the penitentiary of Perrache, in the women's quarters, the happiest results.

"The Commission has thought, then, that it is suitable to enter frankly into a course to which it owes, in great measure, the good that it has obtained and the benevolent approbation which has been granted to its first efforts.

"The hospitals, the prisons and the asylums, opened to the miserable and the unfortunate, are the natural domain of religion, which consoles and corrects. It is there that its influence is useful and necessary. Far from driving it away, it is wise and politic to appeal to it.

"M. Necker, who preceded you in the ministry, had, in this regard, an opinion which has so much the more weight as he wrote at the time when the philosophy of the eighteenth century seemed to strike the last blow to the religious spirit.

"In one of his incomparable writings, this advocate of reform said that this reform could have no more powerful auxiliary than the religious devotion which nourishes and sustains the zeal of those whom it animates, and decrees that order and honesty be maintained among them, by the same motives which have determined their absolute devotion in the service of the poor.

"Such institutions, which are peculiar to the Catholic Communion (and M. Necker, you know, did not belong to this faith), are truly respectable and one can never appreciate too well the help that may be obtained from them. The administration, with the help of the greatest supervision, would never attain the active influence of this secret motive power which leads to the exact accomplishment of the most difficult duties, and which obliges them to devote as much care and attention to obscure and unknown details as the vainest men and those persons most desirous of praise would not be capable of bringing to whatever they would do or say in public.

"The spirit of consistency, which animates religious bodies, maintains, without loss of original spirit, the order which must reign in the prisons and which is perpetuated by an uninterrupted succession of traditions religiously conserved in the center of unity where all the members of the congregation assemble. There is this to be admired about religious congregations, that personal interest and love of money have not any hold on the individual and that everything in them is necessarily done through a sense of duty.

"Lyons, May 14, 1838

"L. Bonnardet, recorder."

Three months after the publication of this report, the Prefect of Bas Rhine asked for six or eight Sisters of Saint Joseph for the central prison of Hagueneau, where only women were imprisoned. Some time later, the Prefect of the North asked for some for the prison of Lille. Since these requests had not been foreseen, the Superiors were not prepared to answer at once. In the Chamber of Deputies, everybody agreed that the reform of the prisons was needed, especially in the prisons for women where men supervised. But not everybody wished the reform to be made in the same manner. Hence, the different systems, and the hot discussions which ended in one decision,—the need of immediate action and the finding of supervisors who possessed all desirable qualities.

"Give me five hundred Sisters," exclaimed M. Thiers, "and I will undertake to reform all the prisons in the kingdom. With their rosaries on their sides, they will certainly have more influence than the keepers with their swords."

"That is possible," somebody answered, "but where shall we find these five hundred Religious who will consent to enclose themselves with the prisoners day and night?"

A member of the Assembly spoke of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the well-conducted prisons of Lyons. The Inspector General of the prisons, Charles Lucas, was commissioned to ascertain the state of affairs for himself, to see the Superior of this convent and to ask her if she would accept the supervision of all the prisons of France, beginning with the central houses. The offer was accepted, in principle, but on the condition that the prisons would be served according to the possibilities of the community.

At once, the Minister of the Interior asked for two hundred Sisters. These would have been given willingly but the community did not have them. The Superior asked for time and as God wanted this work, He bestowed vocations. The Novitiate of the Solitude was filled and it was with the greatest care that these young subjects were prepared for this special mission which requires as much firmness as kindness and supernatural spirit.

Demands came from every quarter. On January 30, 1840, the Inspector General announced that the Minister of the Interior sanctioned the Prefect of Hérault, who made an agreement with the congregation. The Prefect of Maine-et-Loire and the Prefect of Aube invited the Superior to prepare subjects. The latter ended his letter with these words:

> "With the help of God, we shall arrive at a good end, and we will do one of the most meritorious works in His sight and the most useful to the moral and social order of the nation."

On February 20, 1840, the Vice-President of the Administrative Commission of Prisons of Lyons, M. d'Angeville wrote:

> "The good manner of conducting our prisons awakens, on all sides, the desire to imitate us, by using the same means."

The Prefect of Maine-et-Loire, upon invitation from the Government, thought of taking the same means for the Central Prison of Fontevrault:

> "I ask you, Madam, to take charge of the service in this prison, in the section which belongs to the women. You will oblige me infinitely by giving a prompt response to the letter which was addressed to me on this subject, and I pray that your work will increase as well as the good it does."

The prisons suddenly assumed an unforeseen importance. This work had already necessitated a special training. The unexpected growth of this second division could harm the good progress of the Institute, the unity of spirit and the entire observance of the Rule. That was a subject of great anxiety for Mother Saint John. This useful and fruitful apostolic movement must not be stopped, but the other works of the community must neither be submerged nor compromised. One way alone would settle all difficulties: that is, to have two different congregations. The Archbishop having approved this plan, the Sisters worked at once to realize it and to look for a place where they would locate the novitiate for the Sisters who were to have the service of the prisons.

A very providential circumstance decided it. Archbishop de Pins had been Bishop of Limoges for two years before he was appointed administrator of the Diocese of Lyons. He had a great attachment for the Little Seminary of Dorat, Haute Vienne. In 1837, the Superior of this seminary, Father Petit, asked Bishop Tournefort's permission to confide to Religious the infirmary, the linen room, the sacristy and the kitchen of the seminary. Bishop Tournefort expressed this wish to Archbishop de Pins who took an interest at once in the establishment. In October, it had Sisters of Saint Joseph. This circumstance facilitated the search; therefore, it was decided to establish the novitiate there.

Cardinal Fesch died in Rome, in 1839. The Bishop of Le Puy, Monsignor de Boland, succeeded him as Archbishop of Lyons. On January 30, 1841, he issued an ordinance which permitted the Sisters of Saint Joseph to choose freely between the community for the prisons or the community for teaching and other charitable works. Those who chose the prisons were authorized to leave the diocese under the direction of Mother Saint Augustine Quinon.

The new congregation retained the name of Saint Joseph, but it added that of Mary. The Sisters also kept the original habit. The black underveil was replaced by a white one; over this white underveil was in turn placed a blue one and the black veil was pinned over these two. One could soon see a few of the Sisters Marie-Joseph in all the prisons. Those who desire to know them will still find them in the Prison Saint Lazare, Paris. The Sisters of Saint Joseph continued their work in the prisons of Lyons until the Sisters of Marie-Joseph, having satisfied the most pressing needs, were in a position to furnish subjects for Lyons.

The military prison was served by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Rue Victor Hugo, until the promulgation of the law which secularized the Catholic schools. Even after this law, they kept the care of the chapel. In 1926, the Sisters were in charge again. At present, the prison has been suppressed. The Sisters of Saint Joseph also kept the House of Solitude, but the work had changed considerably. Mother Saint Polycarp remained attached to the congregation to which she had given herself in 1819. She died in Vernaison on July 22, 1849.

We can admire here the supernatural disinterestedness of Mother Saint John, as we can throughout the entire course of her life. She never tried to draw profit from a situation. Interest for souls was the only motive of her deeds and her decisions. She never put God at the service of her Institute; she put her Institute at the service of God.

CHAPTER X

MONISTROL LIVES AGAIN

GOD gave Mother Saint John an assistant of great value and absolute devotion,—Mother Saint Francis de Sales Poitrasson-Gonnet. She was a strong and generous soul, who could conquer difficulties and triumph over obstacles. Mother Saint Francis worked with Mother Saint John to have love for the Rule, humility, peace and union with God reign everywhere. She shared all her work and her troubles, and saved her many cares and annoyances.

This may be seen particularly during the renovation of Château Yon. Windows had to be broken on the side facing the missionaries' court. Assuredly the Sisters had the right to have these windows, but it was a delicate matter to adjust; and Mother Saint John was worried at the thought of the discontent it would cause, although she could not avoid it. Taking advantage of the fatigue which had just tried her Superior, Mother Saint Francis said to her: "I beg of you to take a little rest. I will superintend the workmen and direct the improvements in your absence."

Mother Saint John followed this advice. She left, and we are led to believe that she went to Monistrol. She still held dear to her heart this place which had suffered so much. After the Concordat, Father Labruyère had been appointed parish priest. This worthy priest sadly contemplated the ruins left by the Revolution. He wrote to the Prefect of Haute-Loire: "Monistrol has paid dearly for the honor that the Revolutionists of the Department paid it in making it the chief city of the district." He enumerated what the city had lost, while at the same time he worked with all his power to repair the disasters. As nothing was more pressing than the education of youth, he opened, in 1804, a college for young men in the former convent of the Ursulines.

Mother Saint John was eager to reëstablish her school for girls, but there was no building. Three Sisters were now connected with the hospital. Sister Martha was one of them. She must have remained there after leaving the prison, for we do not find her in any other place. Mother Saint John had come to install Sister Saint Louise Ginot as Superior in 1809. Her entrance into this city was a triumph. People crowded everywhere on her passage. They wept with happiness at seeing her again, and they made the most ardent requests that Divine Providence would give her back to those who formerly called her Mother. The Saintly Superior of Maison Pascal did not belong to herself. She had to return, leaving in Monistrol Sister Saint Louis, who had established her community in an old skeleton of a house next to the hospital.

Other Sisters came later to increase the number. In a short time, by their work, their economy and their personal property, they had tripled the value of the house and could assemble children there. We read in the manuscripts of Father Fraisse, another priest of Monistrol: "This service of the good Religious lasted until 1821, rather accepted than regularly authorized by the administration. This date coincides with that of the journey advised by the assistant, and the ease with which the Mother went makes us believe that the journey was justified."

The Sisters had asked for the transfer of the possession of this hospital in consideration of the service that they had rendered and were still rendering, saying that it was only justice to grant them the object of their request. We believe the prefect granted the petition willingly, and that, in order to discuss the business, Mother Saint John had no fear of leaving her home and going to Monistrol.

Sister Martha never left the hospital where she had formerly shown so much zeal and charitable devotion. After spending her strength and her whole heart in the relief of the sick, she died like a saint among her dear poor whom she called her children. The city of Monistrol still treasures the memory of this humble Religious; and her praise is summed up in these words: "She was the worthy daughter of Mother Saint John."

Canon Rivaux relates that after the restoration of the hospital Mother Saint John had the consolation of seeing that of her dear convent. In concert with the new and saintly parish priest of Monistrol, she finally succeeded in buying back this cherished home of her early life which the Revolutionists had sold. This restoration was one of the sweetest joys of her life.

The saintly Mother could not restrain her tears on seeing again the cradle of her vocation. "My dear children," she said, "what sweet consolation I feel on seeing you here again in this house, the witness of our Christian and religious joys and also of our cruel trials. May God be praised Who gives you back to my tenderness. You have been firm in the trial; you will be fervent in your devotion. Remember, my dearly loved daughters, the saintly and paternal exhortations that Bishop de Gallard gave us. May his spirit always live among you."

The parish priest of Monistrol received Mother Saint John and her daughters with deep gratitude to God and showed the greatest kindness toward the fervent auxiliaries whom Divine Providence had sent. He gladly blessed their house, profaned by the Revolution, and he promised them his paternal affection, protection and coöperation. One of his most ardent desires had been granted, and, aided by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, he hoped, through the religious education of the children, to repair the evil the Revolution had done to their fathers. The Christian parents also rejoiced at the return of the holy Religious whose dispersal had deeply affected them. The greater number even of those, whom the Revolution had at first seduced, enlightened now by its ravages, had come back from their wanderings and shared the joy of the Catholics who had remained faithful.

In 1825, the school was transferred to the larger building which it occupies today. The Sisters then gave back the site near the hospital which the administration had given them on July 22, 1821. The hospital itself was later transferred to the Bishop's Palace, and it was in the work necessitated by all these changes that they found again the historic cornerstone. This stone may be seen today over the door of the sacristy, which opens into the interior court of the convent.

Mother Saint John had to return to Monistrol several times. In each one of her visits, she spent some days in the midst of her daughters, dividing her time between the school and the hospital, where she assembled all the poor in a large room. She spoke kindly to them, inquired about the state of their health and left them some aid. "How happy we were," said an old man in the hospital, "when the venerable Mother Saint John came to see us. It was the fortunate one who could approach her, speak to her, contemplate her features and receive her smile so full of kindness and charity." In the beginning, the hospital had no pharmacy. The charitable Mother sent Sister Saint Hilarion from Lyons to establish one. This Sister, like all the daughters of Mother Saint John, has left a blessed memory in Monistrol.

The Diocese of Le Puy was reëstablished in 1823. Bishop de Bonald was called to govern it. Monistrol passed under his obedience and Mother Saint John no longer had it in her care, but her heart was never detached from this dear community. The Sisters at the Chartreux were happy under the wise direction of this Mother, but those in Le Puy regretted not having her. These regrets are understood because many ties bound her to the cradle of the Institute: her birth, her education, the beginning of her religious life and her relations with one of its most devoted benefactors, Bishop de Gallard, the holy Bishop of Le Puy, who died in exile. All these natural and lawful ties explain the regrets caused by the removal of the wise and holy Mother.

A quite unforeseen circumstance gave rise to a touching outburst of these regrets. Mother Saint John had to ask for hospitality in the Motherhouse of Le Puy during a journey that she was obliged to take. The Sister who accompanied her had received express orders to state neither her name nor her position. They introduced themselves as belonging to the Motherhouse of Lyons. In the company of the two Religious from Lyons, the conversation quite naturally turned on Mother Saint John who had established this community after belonging so long to the Diocese of Le Puy. The Sisters in the Motherhouse of Le Puy knew thoroughly her life and her virtues. Thus they hastened to congratulate the two Sisters from Lyons on their good fortune in having her for their Superior.

The conversation continued on her deeds and eminent religious spirit. The humble Mother did all she could to change such a conversation, which put her in a rather embarrassing position. Finding this useless and the Sisters of Le Puy continuing her praises, she told them that they exaggerated; that Mother Saint John had not done such great things; and, up to that time, she herself saw nothing so extraordinary in her life.

"At this moment an aged Sister, who had been a member of the community of Monistrol before the Revolution, entered the room. She had been prevented from appearing sooner on account of infirmities. On recognizing her former Superior she cast herself into her arms, shedding tears of happiness, not knowing how to express her love and her joy. This touching spectacle put an end to the first struggle of humility and charity, only to begin one more painful to the heart of her who was its object. The Sisters of Le Puy conceived the plan of keeping her as a pearl which belonged to Le Puy rather than to Lyons. They appealed to Bishop de Bonald to approve and forward their desires with Mother Saint John and the Archbishop of Lyons. All was unavailing. The saintly Mother had recognized God's will in the events that had placed her in Lyons. Tearing herself away from arms that clasped her so tenderly, she returned to those whom God had given her for her daughters in such a visible manner."

When Mother Saint John returned after her journeys, there was a real feast. As soon as the recreation bell rang, the Sisters pressed closely around and questioned her; they listened to her; they drank in all the news of the absent Sisters, their works, their joys, their sorrows and their consolations. The Sisters told her a thousand nothings which happened in her absence. How eagerly the Sisters went to those recreations. How their strength was renewed by them. They did not want to lose one minute of those happy moments. It was there that they tasted real family life and that, without constraint, the bow relaxed, the tongues loosened, souls dilated and hearts grew warm. It was there that they truly felt themselves loved, for even in the convent one needs to feel oneself loved.

In his "Christian Life and Virtues," Monsignor Gay says: "It is the attribute of the religious life, well understood and piously led, to develop considerably the affective power. To love less would be a strange effect of close union with God Who is all Love." They loved one another in a holy, supernatural manner in the Motherhouse of the Chartreux. Mother Saint John's kindness led her to treat the Sisters as daughters rather than as subordinates. The Sisters loved her because they felt themselves loved by her. Everything that she commanded seemed easy, since she first showed the example.

CHAPTER XI

THE THOUGHTFUL MOTHER

IT is time to return to Mother Saint Francis whom we left struggling with the cares of building. While Mother Saint John was busy, outwardly, with the interests of the community, her assistant hurried the workmen, encouraged them and bore the disagreements inevitable in such a project. On the return of the Superior General, the windows that had caused so much trouble, were opened and the work finished. At a glance, Mother Saint John saw and understood everything. Touched by the devotion and tenderness of Mother Saint Francis who had assumed the disagreeable task for her, she thanked God for having given her such an assistant.

Mother Saint Francis was not the only gift which God gave to the Superior General. Mother Scholastica, the Mistress of Novices, was also a great help to her. Gentle, affable and attractive, the pious mistress soon won the hearts of her novices whom she led to God by the way of love. "Let us do all for the pure love of God," she often said. "Let us love the Spouse of our souls with all our hearts and the greatest sacrifices will be easy."

Under this sweet, strong direction, the novices learned that they could be very happy while practising self-immolation,—a precious secret which the world does not know. It was with holy joy that the first daughters of Saint Joseph were formed to a serious and solid religious life. The fervent mistress found in her constant union with God her light, strength, love and respect for souls; and the novices allowed themselves to be imbued with the atmosphere of peace which pervaded the house. By contact and imitation, the novices were trained to the interior life indispensable to the apostolic souls they were soon to become.

In the beginning, grace supplied for lack of time in the training of subjects. Needs were so pressing that charity suffered no delay. They had to go at once to the poor, to the sick and to children. As the numbers of postulants increased, the Superiors felt the danger of a hasty and incomplete training; therefore, desirable changes were made. The conferences for the novices and for the professed Sisters were different, thus giving to each class the spiritual food suitable to it. The novitiate was prolonged; the postulancy was one year. In this way, the Superiors could be more certain of the solidity of vocations. Finally, it was decided that the subjects admitted to the congregation would not be sent back to their own cities or towns. That was a wise precaution to increase the religious spirit.

The professional training became the object of great care. Mistresses of study were connected with the novitiate. The postulants had regular classes, lessons in discipline and serious classical examinations. These arrangements raised the standard of studies and permitted the Sisters, after Mother Saint John's death, to comply with the request of the Prefects of the Rhone and the Loire, who asked the Sisters of Saint Joseph to open in the motherhouse a Normal School for the training of the secular teachers of these two Departments. This request was granted. The school was opened and functioned to the satisfaction of the inspectors and Rectors of the Academy until 1880, the period of secularization of schools.

The novitiate was Mother Saint John's great preoccupation. She was most anxious for the culture of the intellect of the postulants and novices; but she attended to the training of their hearts and souls above all else. The outward conformity to the religious life did not please her. She wanted the spirit also. The exterior manifestation of the religious life is the entire accomplishment of the Rule. Mother Saint John watched over it with jealous care; but the Rule is only the envelope of the spiritual life. The beautiful, true and noble religious life is intimate and uninterrupted union with the Saviour, the faithful Companion of the soul which acts for Him, in Him and with Him.

Mother Saint John led this life of divine union; that is why she could speak of it. The novices and their mistresses received her words stamped with the Spirit from on high and kept them in their hearts. One gives what he has. Mother Saint John gave from the fullness of her soul. Her visits to the novitiate were frequent; her coming produced the effect of a ray of sunlight; it gladdened all hearts. "Never," a Sister said later, "could anybody speak to us of our vocation as a Sister of Saint Joseph as our Reverend Mother did. We hung on her lips and we drank in the words which flowed from them." After these discourses, the novices knew that Heaven was to be won, that they, to be good for anything, must themselves be blessed by God. All were filled with the greatest generosity, certain, in advance, that grace would not be wanting.

Like the holy Bishop of Geneva, Mother Saint John did not admire gloomy dispositions. "In principle, a joyful character is for the spiritual life a very favorable condition and truly an enormous advantage; for the sad,—I do not say the serious ones,—are sorry strugglers!" [1] Neither did she like the spirit of singularity, which changes the aspect of the Institute, the additional burden of private devotions and superadded prayers which make one neglect duty or regular observances. She wanted the Rule and the common life; she allowed herself nothing else. Indulgent and always inclined to pardon, her words were inspired by wisdom and charity.

The worthy Mother recalled unceasingly to the postulants and novices the holy traditions of modesty, regularity and simplicity, which make the glory of the Institute and which exercise a happy influence on all those they approach. She gave the example of all these virtues. One day, after having recommended the observance of the smallest things, which are truly great when one does them for the love of God, she added: "When one has not been faithful to a recommendation, it is necessary to punish oneself and perform an act which will redeem the carelessness."

After this lesson to the novices, she happened to enter the kitchen and forgot to close the door. The Sister felt the draft and said without turning her head: "The one who left the door open must kiss the floor." At once, Mother Saint John knelt on the kitchen floor and kissed it. At this moment, the Sister turned around and saw the Superior General on her knees. Overwhelmed, she offered many excuses. "I have committed the fault," the good Mother answered simply; "it is but right that I perform the penance."

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[1] Mgr. Gay: *De la vie et des vertus chrétiennes.* Vol. I, p. 186.

Mother Saint John had touching tenderness for her daughters. It was the custom at that time to have a piece of bread at lunch. A Sister who had poor health was often surprised at finding in her drawer in the refectory some fruit or other tasty morsel added to her bread and did not know whom to thank for this delicate attention. It was Mother Saint John who passed from her drawer to her daughter's the dainties that the Sisters thought should be granted to her rank, but which she did not accept. She used to say: "I wish nothing more than the others, in order to be like them." Her table, her room and her wardrobe were a lesson. She could have said: "Look and do as I."

This fidelity to teaching by example gave greater weight to her counsels, her least exhortations and to her commands. "When Mother Saint John had spoken, all was said," one of her daughters remarked. "The Sisters obeyed willingly and promptly. If she reproved, the one reprimanded felt that she was guilty and her only desire was to repair her fault."

When it was a question of a vocation, Mother Saint John knew how to "play Providence." Two young girls were anxious to enter the Congregation of Saint Joseph, but their father could not do without them. Mother Saint John took all three: the father, as gardener; the daughters, as postulants. The father remained at the motherhouse until his death. In another circumstance, a true vocation was presented but the young girl's mother needed her work and care. The charitable Superior took charge of the mother, gave her a room in the convent, provided for her needs and the young girl entered.

"Near the motherhouse lived the holy family, Bernard.

This family imitated the virtues of Saint Bernard, and the vocation of its eight chlidren was not without resemblance to the entrance of the Saint and his brothers into the monastery of Citeaux. The parents were devout Christians whose faith had been put to the test. Their whole ambition was to make their children saints and they had the happiness of succeeding. Mother Saint John knew and loved the Bernard family. She was regarded by it as a saint; so much so, that, in a catechism lesson which he was giving his children, M. Bernard having told them that our Lord Jesus Christ had died to save all men and that, without this precious death, no one could have been saved, his youngest daughter, in her veneration for Mother Saint John, could not believe that she would have been lost and treated like the others. Her rare virtue had made such a deep impression on this charming little girl that she burst into tears at the thought that the saintly Mother might have been damned."

This virtue, so deeply impressed on the young child's heart, drew her and all her sisters into the Congregation of Saint Joseph. The father objected to the entrance of the eldest daughter who had been educated by Sisters of a different congregation, because he thought that gratitude should give it the preference. "Father," she answered, "my desire is to become a daughter of the venerable Mother Saint John. Her virtues have won my heart." The six sisters followed the same holy attraction as their eldest sister. It is thus that the pious Bernard family gave its seven daughters to God, in the Congregation of Saint Joseph. Their brother consecrated himself to God in the priesthood.

Mother Saint John and the Mistress of Novices worked together to make perfect virtue loved. They won hearts and minds to it by their words and, still more, by their example. They thought only of giving holy Religious to the congregation which placed them at the service of God and souls. The mistresses of study were inspired by the same spirit and worked in accord with the venerable Mother.

Admirably situated in the city of Mary and built on the former hill of the Chartreux, almost on the level with and directly opposite the holy hill of Fourvière, the motherhouse and the novitiate were constantly in view of the sweet and refreshing presence of the Blessed Virgin. One could have said that Mary wanted to have always under her eyes the family of her Spouse. Is it not, besides, by a sort of right that the daughters of Saint Joseph occupy the dear, blessed place of their Father who ever lived in Mary's presence? All was wise and maternal in the Superior's government. Canon Rivaux remarks:

> "The deciding of appointments and removals is one of the most delicate and difficult. These decisions expose one to vexations. Mother Saint John made them with a simplicity, integrity, purity of intention, wisdom and kindness which admirably disposed all to accept them. Those not well placed went away encouraged, resigned and contented. No human consideration interfered with her decisions; and the choice of subjects was made with so much wisdom and such a rare discernment of minds and characters that she rarely had to change them. The prudent Superior General, before the definite decision, took everything into consideration: seniority, services rendered, proofs of zeal, devotion, wisdom, ability in teaching or the direction of works of charity, health, climate of the city or country and dispositions. Everything had been proved and harmonized as much as is possible to human infirmity."

At the same time that she sent angels of peace and devotion to all misfortunes, Mother Saint John remembered that these angels did not as yet form a part of the celestial militia, that they felt the burdens of the day and the fatigues of age. Her maternal heart thought of providing a place of rest for the young, broken-down before their time and for those on whom the years weighed heavily. This place of rest must be found outside of Lyons in a place with pure air. It must be near Lyons to permit the Mother and children to see one another often and easily. God guided her in her search.

Mother Saint John bought a country home in the suburbs of Lyons, at Vernaison, on the shores of the Rhone, in the midst of fertile hills whose enchanted slopes, descending to the river, were planted with vineyards and dotted with pretty villas. The pure air, the rays of the sun and the waters seemed to conspire and dispute among themselves in offering an admirable mixture of fresh breezes and vivifying warmth. Mother Saint John would like to have built a palace for her dear majesties of old age, work, devotion and virtue. She had at least the happiness and glory of laying the foundations for the beautiful Rest House which the Institute possesses today.

CHAPTER XII

AT THE FEET OF OUR LADY

ON the plateau of the Chartreux, besides the parish Providence of Saint Bruno, two other providences had been established,—Madame Mercier's and that of the *Jeunes Économes.* Madame Mercier experienced that difficulty which a lay person always meets, when conducting a work that necessitates absolute unselfishness for any length of time; namely, a lack of whole-souled coöperation. She thought to merge her work with that of the Providence of Saint Bruno and to enter the Congregation of Saint Joseph. Mother Saint John refused this request. Perhaps this union would have brought too heavy burdens for the parish or the congregation.

The Superior General showed herself more favorable to the request made by the second providence, which was supported by the *Jeunes Économes.* Madame Bureau de Puzy inspired her daughter, Sarah de Puzy, with her own generous charity. On May 24, 1804, she assembled in the drawing-room of her large house a few of Sarah's friends. After talking with them about the dangers to which poor motherless girls were exposed in consequence of isolation and helplessness, she proposed the plan to rescue these children from peril by removing them from misery.

She asked them to save one cent each day in behalf of these children and to obtain from their friends and acquaintances a similar daily saving. The idea was received with enthusiasm. The young girls bound themselves to save this money and to spread the good work. They did so well, that, in a short time all the distinguished young ladies in Lyons considered it a glory and a pleasure to be members of the association which they named *Société des Jeunes Économes.*

The *Jeunes Économes* were happy when they became rather rich. They made investigations, drew up lists of needy children and chose from among the associates, the most ardent and zealous who went to the homes of their protégées to distribute the proceeds of their saving. The joy of those who received was very great, but undoubtedly it did not equal that of those who gave.

These young women soon realized that this method of helping did not avert all the dangers they feared; nor did it accomplish all the good for which they hoped. Instead of being used to satisfy real needs, the savings were very often wasted in useless expenses. They understood that, in order to accomplish real good, they must go about it in a different way. After much reasoning, they arrived at the only possible solution, to group these children and confide them to the care of Religious who were alone capable of securing, with the prudent use of the money, a practical, maternal and continuous education.

The directresses went to the Archbishop and explained the situation. He said: "Confine your work to the Sisters of Saint Joseph." Submissive to this suggestion, the directresses went to the Chartreux. That was in 1821. Mother Saint John was still in the cloisters. She received the deputation kindly and listened attentively to its propositions. The Religious would govern the house and attend to the entire training of the children. The *Jeunes Économes* would assume all the material charges of food and support. Mother Saint John told them to look for a site and promised to give them Sisters as soon as they were ready to receive them.

A house was bought in Clos Champavert near the Chartreux, whither the little orphans were brought. Mother Saint Claire was appointed Superior. The Sisters undertook the education of these little ones. The number of children increased, and, as the house became too small, the *Jeunes Économes* had to find another. The society bought a house in Fourvière, to which the children were transferred and the charitable young people assumed the support of forty orphan girls. That was too heavy a burden for the small savings. One day the Council declared that the money was no longer sufficient to pay the expenses and that the society would be obliged to give up the work.

This caused great anxiety in Saint Joseph's. What would they do with the little ones? Must they put them out into the street? This idea was so repugnant to the hearts of the Religious that the motherhouse decided to keep them, knowing well that Divine Providence would never fail the providence on earth. The congregation bought the buildings and the gardens at the price the *Jeunes Économes* paid for them, and took complete charge of the work.

It was a good solution for this economic problem. The orphans continued to receive all wished-for care, and the number was increased to sixty, without any lack of resources. Today these dear children are the usual choristers in the Basilica of Fourvière. Their fresh, pure voices rise to the domes sparkling with gold and mosaics, and make the praises of the purest of Virgins resound in her beautiful temple. The work of the *Jeunes Économes* still exists, but it measures its liberality according to its resources. The society adopts little girls and sends them to the different homes that always have places in reserve. Saint Bruno's is always one of the houses chosen.

Still in Croix-Rousse, fifteen minutes from the Chartreux, Mother Saint John was destined to establish another providence in the parish of Saint Denis. On the plateau of Croix-Rousse, there lived two pious young women, Mesdemoiselles Pallière and Joandel, who were bound by the ties of affection. The two friends had established in a house belonging to M. Pallière, father of the former, a workshop for weaving in which they employed eight operatives and several apprentices. These women lived like sisters and were mutually well-disposed toward one another. There existed at that time several similar workshops in Croix-Rousse. Christian young women grouped together to work with less expense and to help one another to live well.

In 1825, the Mesdemoiselles Pallière and Joandel conceived the idea of embracing the religious life. Encouraged by Father de Forcrand, they went to the motherhouse of Lyons and manifested their desire to enter the novitiate. At that time they proposed to yield to the congregation, by way of dowry, their workshop with its stock of tools and personnel, the young workers wishing to continue to work there and to train apprentices.

It was the intention of the pious young women, when giving their shop, to permit the Sisters to establish and maintain, with the profits realized from the work, a new providence in which little girls would be brought up as Christians, taught to sew and to weave silk, so that, when leaving the establishment, they would be in a position to earn their living. A location was necessary for the founding of this orphanage. M. Pallière, seconding his daughter's wishes, offered the Sisters the free use of his house, Montée de la Boucle, as a temporary dwelling, and gave the furniture indispensable for its occupation.

Mother Saint John who saw a real good about to take place, accepted all,—the shop, the young women and the expenses. She began at once to look for a site for the providence. As usual she relied on God Who always lends His aid to those who work for His glory. It was not Mother Saint John who was directing her life; it was God.

There was a house for sale in a narrow street which was later called *Le Passage de l'Enfance.* Mother Saint John communicated with the proprietor, Jacques Bancillon, and spoke to him about the proposed work. The worthy Mother found at once an echo in the heart of this good Christian. Desirous to partake in this charitable work he sold his house at the reasonable price of thirty-three thousand francs; and, as the finances of the motherhouse did not permit immediate payment, he granted all necessary delay for the discharge of this debt.

The work prospered under the direction of Mother Saint Victor, but before she could pay for the house she had to feed and support the orphans. It was at this time that Jacques Bancillon showed fatherly sentiments for these children. Knowing that they could not pay, he demanded nothing, and made them a gift of the thirty-three thousand francs. In his will (1831) he bequeathed to the providence all the buildings occupied by him and near to the one sold to the Sisters. His brother kept possession of this estate. His heirs, less disinterested and less Christian than the donor, contested the will. The Prefecture refused the house, sold, according to law, but given in reality.

The Providence Croix-Rousse was thus condemned to disappear. Mother Saint John could not be resigned to it. She offered to keep the house by paying the price stated in the bill of sale; but the heirs demanded the price agreed by the sale and the interest on the money. Rather than begin a lawsuit which is always disagreeable to Religious, she paid forty thousand francs for the house and abandoned the buildings which would have given a magnificent expansion to a benevolent work; but the resources of the motherhouse would not permit her to acquire this property.

The trial weighed heavily on the Superior General, though it lessened neither her faith nor her invincible confidence. She knew that God is always hidden behind the trial, ever ready to stretch forth His hand to those who rely on Him in their needs. The purchase of Vernaison had exhausted all resources. Mother and daughters resumed the work with renewed ardor and Croix-Rousse continued to exist and shelter many orphans. Later, other trials brought sorrowful changes into this house; but one can still see orphans and Sisters of Saint Joseph there.

At the time of the foundation of Croix-Rousse, there was another house established on the plains of La Guillotière. When this foundation was requested, La Guillotière was not a part of Lyons. It had been separated by the Convention, together with Croix-Rousse, to punish the city for its revolt; and these two suburbs were raised to the rank of city. It was to the city of La Guillotière that Mother Saint John sent a swarm from her hive.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Religious of Saint Francis exercised a fruitful apostolate in this

Lyonnais suburb. Their church was placed under the title of Saint Louis, King of France. The Revolution drove out the Religious. Their church, at first, assumed the constitutional religion and was sold during the Terror to Michael Creuzet. La Guillotière had no church when the Concordat permitted the exercise of religion. Michael Creuzet consented to resell to the commune for the service of the Catholic Religion the church of which he was the proprietor. As he received the money from the commune with one hand, he made the parish a very rich gift with the other. This act of generosity did not pass unnoticed. Rue Creuzet still recalls its memory.

The parish priests had succeeded one another since 1802. When Father Neyrat was appointed in 1818, he decided to enlarge the rather small church and to call assistants. One can easily understand the need of these aids when he knows that the parish had to serve the sixteen parishes which are today on the left bank of the Rhone. The three priests of this parish had to serve the entire sections of La Guillotière and Les Brotteaux. Doubtless, at that time, the population was less numerous than it is today; but it was important since the population of Lyons was doubled when La Guillotière was annexed again in 1825.

Everywhere the people praised the good services of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. "These modest valuable auxiliaries spare neither time nor trouble," one priest wrote. "Fatigue counts nothing for them when the interest of souls is at stake," said another. Father Neyrat decided that the parish Notre-Dame-Saint-Louis would have Sisters of Saint Joseph.

The cemetery of La Guillotière having become too small, the commune obtained permission to bury its dead in the cemetery of the Hôtel-Dieu above Castle de la Mothe. Houses were built on the site of the former cemetery. Father Neyrat bought one in which he assembled three young girls who showed serious signs of vocation. They were Mesdemoiselles Guignon, Laval and Montégou. Then, appealing to the Superior General of Saint Joseph, he begged her to adopt these aspirants to the religious life.

At that time, Mother Saint John had more than eighty houses under her authority. The community was installed in Château Yon and the novitiate occupied the new building. This was insufficient to receive all the candidates who presented themselves. It was necessary to have another place for the reception and training of postulants. Mother Saint Paul Didier was sent to establish a postulate at La Guillotière, in 1824.

Mother Saint Paul began at once the teaching and training of the three postulants. The time of trial completed, the ceremony of reception took place with great pomp in the Church Notre-Dame-Saint-Louis. Mesdemoiselles Guignon, Laval and Montégou were to be known as Sister Mary of the Nativity, Sister Saint Camilla and Sister Saint Joseph. The community was established near Château de la Mothe, now a barracks.

The house was not large enough for the works that the community was to undertake. Father Neyrat started the erection of the large building that is occupied today by the children. Although it counted but two stories above the ground floor, it was good for a beginning. Father Neyrat had to leave the church of Saint Louis, as he had been appointed parish priest of Saint Francis de Sales in 1829; but he remained proprietor of the estate and assumed all expenses until the community had saved some money. He sold the property to the Sisters and continued to show them his paternal devotion.

Father Noailly, who succeeded him, was also a father to the community. On reading his will, there was a last proof of it. The venerable and regretted priest left an income to the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Financially, this income had little value, but it preserves in the community a feeling of deep gratitude to the donor. The Sisters have striven, by their prayers, to discharge this debt of gratitude.

At that time there lived in the parish of La Guillotière the esteemed and wealthy family Alix. One of the daughters of this family had entered the congregation. She received the name Sister Saint Charles at her reception and was sent to Montbrison. In 1825, she was recalled to Lyons and stationed in her own parish where all charitable works had made rapid progress. Mademoiselle Alix gave to the community a house and an adjacent meadow.

In 1831, Mother Saint Paul returned to the motherhouse, and Sister Saint Charles was appointed Superior with permission to build, since the house had become too small for their needs. After extending the house and raising it one story higher along its length, she added an upper gallery to the chapel, and, above this addition, had three stories built which enlarged the building with a classroom, workroom, an extension to the dormitory and a garret.

Then there were suitable living quarters in the convent which faced Rue Rave now Rue Garibaldi. One still sees a boarding-school, a day-school and an orphanage on the site. The hive was so well filled that, when an infant school was needed, the Sisters had to open a branch in Rue Vigilance. Every morning the Sisters went there for class; and, in order that their community exercises might be held in common, they returned to the convent after the dismissal of the children.

The school of Rue Vigilance grew so rapidly that the Superior General established a new convent, independent of the first, and sent a Superior. The Sisters of Saint Joseph then had two flourishing communities in La Guillotière while waiting to add two more,—that of the large General Dispensary of Lyons and Doctor Bernard's clinic at Brotteaux near the Parc de la Tête d' Or.

Although they had their chapel and their chaplain, the Sisters remained and still are attached to the parish Notre-Dame-Saint-Louis, mother of fifteen other parishes. From the time they became a part of the large family of Saint Louis, the Sisters have attended to the sacristy and the care of the linens, the vestments and the altars. They interest themselves with all their heart in the very beautiful, numerous and perfectly directed activities of this model parish.

The Sisters were always deeply interested in the work of apprenticeship of Father Boisard, which was opened beside them. This work resembles that of Saint John Bosco. The Sisters gave to the work a modest coöperation in the shadow of the kitchen and clothes room. When the Sisters agreed to give these humble but necessary services, Father Boisard appointed one of the priests as chaplain.

In one of the sections of greatest ill fame, another very holy priest, animated with the spirit of God, stopped one day before a large building called the Prado. In this building, a thousand pagans could dance at their ease. The Prado was the meeting-place of men of low degree, for whom the life of the day is everything; the life eternal, nothing. Poor men for whom we must have great pity, it was not always their own fault that they were as they were. This priest had no money, yet he contemplated this building with a covetous eye. "My God," he said, "give me this building and I will give you souls." The good God gave Father Chevrier the house he wanted.

A much needed chapel was donated by a Protestant, M. Froissard, director of the lumber-yards of La Buire, who paid from his own pocket for the wood and workmen necessary for the erection of this modest sanctuary. The chapel had to be decorated. A workman devoted his nights to make a chandelier ornamented with drops of cut glass. The entire neighborhood united to furnish sacred vessels, altar linens, vestments, candlesticks and a bell.

In less than two months the chapel could be used and the children were received. These children had to be boarders. Small beds, sheets and bedclothes were needed. Some working-women deprived themselves of their savings, their trinkets and their table service to pay for these. The children were sent by former habitués of the dance-hall. The three conditions necessary to be admitted to Father Chevrier's home were: to know nothing, to have nothing and to be worth nothing. With these three elements, the man of God expected to do something. When the children arrived, Father Chevrier put the girls on the right, and the boys on the left. He taught them catechism. This was the beginning of the work for late First Communions and which gave so many souls to God.

The Prado was not far from the Sisters of Saint Joseph. They, too, wished to do something for this beautiful work, but they were not rich. They did what they could. In the difficult beginnings, they provided soup for the children and often mended the clothing of the restless owners. It was not much; but Father Chevrier never lost the memory of this little assistance. I think, even in Heaven, he still remembers it; for, after having been a field-hospital for one hundred and twenty wounded soldiers during the war, the convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Rue Garibaldi, whose classes were closed by the Law of 1904, is again the home of children. For thirteen years, the establishmbent has been living under such an exceptional régime that one cannot help saying: "It has protectors in Heaven."

CHAPTER XIII

A FRIEND IN THE CURÉ D'ARS

WHEN the Concordat restored peace to the Church, several new parishes were formed in Lyons on the ruins of the monasteries. Saint Pierre, Saint Polycarp and Saint Francis are three of these new parishes, where the Sisters of Saint Joseph had schools or hospitals. The parish of Saint Pierre had for its church the chapel of the ancient royal abbey of Sainte-Marie des Terreaux.

Near this church Father Alumbert founded a hospital of eighteen beds for the infirm and the most abandoned and needy of the parish. The supervision of it was confided to the Ladies of Mercy who guaranteed its maintenance through collections and annual subscriptions. The care of the establishment and the patients was confided to paid servants. The authorities soon saw that this kind of work was done only for money. In spite of all the precautions taken in the choice of these hired helpers, it was found necessary to dismiss them in 1825, and to ask the Sisters of Saint Joseph to take charge of the institution. Mother Saint John answered this appeal and at the same time took charge of the hospital of Saint Polycarp.

Near Les Terreaux, but on the other side of the square, the Oratorians had built their monastery and church. These priests who rendered such signal services in the education of youth were, like others, driven from their home by the Revolution. The church was given over to the constitutional religion and the monastery became the home of the schismatic priest, Francis Rozier. He took the oath, assumed possession of the Oratory Church and installed himself in the monastery.

In 1793, the Revolutionists decreed to besiege Lyons. They came with no intention of injuring the priest nor did he bother himself about the attack on the city and its defense. On the evening of September 28, he went to bed as usual. Unfortunately for him the besiegers were alert that night; and a bomb thrown by them from Les Brotteaux fell on the oratory, crushing the intruder in his bed.

When the tempest ceased, the Oratory Church became the Church of Saint Pierre, in which the Catholic religion was reëstablished in 1803. A house back of the church had been assigned to the board of trustees. Father Gourdiat, who seeing at close range the suffering of the people in his parish, would have liked to comfort all, but his wish went further than his resources. He resolved to do something for the aged, the sick and the infirm, with the aid of the Ladies of Mercy. Doubtless, there were in Lyons, houses suitable for this class of needy persons, and the Ladies of Mercy made every effort to have them admitted, be it in La Charité or La Guillotière which had its Old People's home. Applicants, however, had to wait their turn for admission and necessity does not wait. Fortunately, charity is ingenious. Unable to do better, Father Gourdiat decided to open in the vestry house, not a hospital properly so-called, but a reception house in which the needy were generally detained for a month until they could be admitted to the home where their names were listed.

As at Saint Pierre, the care of the house and its inmates was as first confided to people who were paid; but this plan had to be abandoned. In 1830, the Sisters of Saint Joseph took over the direction of the house. This shelter was opened only to women. The latter were so well cared for, that at the end of the month, some of them could not make up their minds to go to another hospital; but, resources did not permit keeping them, unless they could pay the moderate board of ten cents a day.

In 1832, a third Home was opened in the parish of Saint Francis for the old people of both sexes. It was located on the former site of the "Filles Pénitentes." The foundation of this home is attributed to Madame de la Balmondière, whose name is often associated with the charitable works of the time.

Again we find this hospice in the care of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

To these three establishments for the aged, homes for the young were soon annexed, and for these Mother Saint John had to supply Sisters. At Saint Francis, there was the clerical school whose boarders were under the care of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. At Saint Pierre, there was an orphanage for girls, opened near the Home, a workshop and an orphanage for little boys which has given several priests to the Church. This very Christian parish passed through many changes. The city took the church. The Home and its annexes changed places several times, and finally the parish was suppressed. The charitable works were abolished at the same time; only the orphanage for girls remains and it has been transferred to Croix-Rousse, to their country house.

In the parish of Saint Polycarp was formed the *Society of the Angel Guardian* which had for its aim to furnish books, paper, pens, coal and shoes, as rewards for the children who attended the Christian schools. That was an excellent project and answered many needs. Other needs, still more real, remained to be relieved. In this same parish, there were at that time, several children deprived of both parents. These children were growing up as well as they could, but their innocence, particularly that of the little girls, was seriously jeopardized. These children had to be collected as quickly as possible, and given mothers to replace theirs.

A providence was more easily created there than at any other place. The house of the board of trustees which opened on Rue du Commerce was large enough for the Home and the orphanage. The Sisters replaced the mothers and the Ladies of Mercy attended to the material needs. Money was lacking with which bread for the orphans might be assured. These ladies took it upon themselves to find it. The money was found and the providence still exists in the same house and under the protection of its visible angels.

Homes were then established for the children and the sick. Not all the sick, however, were in the hospitals or in the reception house. Doctors who visited them knew this better than anybody, and their hearts often suffered. Moved by cases of suffering they had met, some celebrated, charitable Lyonnais doctors conceived the plan of administering gratuitously to the needy all the assistance which they might need for medicines and surgery. The doctors planned subscriptions of thirty francs (about six dollars before the war) which gave to each subscriber the right to have, free of charge, twelve sick people cared for at home during a month, or one sick person for a year.

In Lyons, a charitable project was always welcomed. In 1818, the General Dispensary was created, with an Administrative Council composed of the most honored citizens and the most renowned doctors of the city. A house, acquired in Rue de la Poulaillerie, became the center of the work. On the ground floor was installed the pharmacy and, on the other floors, the offices and consultation rooms. A service of night watchers was organized and the council asked for ten Sisters of Saint Joseph. Today there are twelve Sisters in this fine establishment situated near the prefecture at 124 Rue Molière whither the General Dispensary was transferred.

The Sisters acquit themselves of their multiple duties with gentleness and patience. They register the names of the patients, give out the remedies, distribute the bandages, make the dressings and many other things. A doctor is appointed for each enrolling of the city. The subscribers recommend to him the poor patients. He visits them and the Sisters distribute the remedies. The best specialists go on certain days and give free consultations for all bodily ailments.

From the Chartreux, Mother Saint John followed all these works with a maternal solicitude and often visited them. "How happy we were," said an aged Sister, "under the care and direction of our venerable Mother Saint John. The Sisters rivalled one another in humility, mortification and obedience. Her example drew us to good and to perfection. Her humility was so deep, that she seemed the least of all. She was really so in her own esteem. The more she abased herself, the more her daughters surrounded her with deep respect and filial devotion."

Canon Rivaux tells us that there was in Mother Saint John something of the just, simple and upright spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul,—admirable qualities that are both the effect and privilege of true virtue and sanctity. This respect, this almost religious reverence, increased in proportion as one approached or saw the venerable Mother more closely. In the world, it is the opposite. Great men, even men of genius, seen closely, lose their prestige; a fact which has caused a celebrated man to say: "A certain distance is the necessary disguise of human grandeurs." Mother Saint John in her humble simplicity seemed all the greater the nearer one approached her. This grandeur inspired no fear because she was indulgent and kind. That is why her daughters had such deep affection and such complete devotion for her. That is why in the dispensary and everywhere else, they loved to see her come.

Her kindness and charity were not limited to her daughters and their relatives. They embraced all kinds of misery. In order to relieve suffering and to console those afflicted in any way, she had organized among her Sisters a group charged with discovering hidden poverty; and we might say her heart went out instinctively to these unfortunate people. The good Mother always found means of easing these miseries; and, yet, the Sisters of Saint Joseph were not rich.

The Institute had, near the gates of Lyons, a very poor community. It was at Dardilly, the birthplace of the Curé of Ars. To replace the aged Superior, the Superior General thought of Mother Madeleine Collet who had just had, at Belleville-sur-Saône, all sorts of disappointments. The erection of a boarding-school had drawn her into unforeseen expenses and, when the building was already far advanced, the Saône, overflowing one day, carried away the building, leaving nothing but debts. Mother Madeleine had to leave Belleville, entrusting to another the burden of erecting a new building, far from the reach of the sudden and frequent risings of the beautiful but dangerous neighbor. She was sad and somewhat discouraged when she arrived in Dardilly, destitute of all resources. Her heart was torn and she felt herself plunged into great dejection at the sight of the unfurnished school whose foundations were built on hardened earth. Must she tell Mother Saint John that the house was not suitable, that she should withdraw the Sisters; or would it be better to try to discover means to improve the situation? Her perplexity was great. She decided then to consult the Curé of Ars, native of Dardilly. Doubtless, he would interest himself in the community of his native village.

She was not mistaken. The saintly Curé said: "Fear nothing; buy this land which is near our property and build a boarding-school there. Oh! what holy Religious will leave that house!"

"How do you expect me to buy it?" asked Mother Madeleine, "I have many debts. My Superiors will not permit it."

"Buy," he replied. "I will help you."

The property which he advised her to buy belonged to the notary of Dardilly. The notary intended to sell his office and its outbuildings. Having been acquainted with this project by the saintly Thaumaturgus and urged by him, Mother Madeleine bought the property with the permission of her Superiors and the Curé of Ars helped as he had promised. He built the walls of the house blessed by Saint Joseph. If money were lacking when a note came to maturity, the Sisters hastened to Ars. If the Superior came, she explained the matter to the holy Curé who gave her the necessary money. If a Sister went simply to pray and satisfy her devotion, before leaving the confessional the holy priest used to say: "Wait. I want to send a holy picture to your Mother." The Superior found help in the sealed envelope.

Thus was built, opposite the birthplace of the holy Curé of Ars and under his protection, the very fine property of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in which they have the community Juniorate today. As Mother Madeleine belonged to a well-known family of Lyons, children from the most respected families came in large numbers when the boarding-school was opened. The school acquired a prestige that it kept until secularization laws closed its doors.

We read in the archives: "Father Vianney spoke frequently of the blessings that Heaven would bestow on our convent and of its future prosperity. He foretold a time when our material cares would cease. With rare kindness and touching affection, he interested himself in all the joys and sorrows of the house. The First Communions of our children and their entrance into the boarding-school always received from him a special blessing. It would be difficult for us to tell the joys, the consolation, the strength and the encouragement that both teachers and pupils drew from it."

The time came when the state of Father Vianney's health inspired fears. The Sisters desired to acquire an authentic relic of the holy priest while he was yet living; but how could they obtain it? They thought of knitting stockings. When the stockings were finished, the Superior went to Ars and said to the holy Curé: "We have made you some stockings. I would like to know if they fit you. You must try them on."

"They will surely fit," he answered. "I have not the time to try them on now."

"That will be done very quickly. If they fit you, keep them. It will take you but a few minutes."

The ruse succeeded. The holy priest went up to his room. He came down wearing the new stockings and the Superior carried away those he had just taken off. These stockings have cured several sick people either in the school or parish. This relic excited covetousness and one of the stockings was stolen. This stocking and a vial filled with miraculous wine have the seal of authenticity.

Mother Madeleine had the consolation of being present at the priest's death. Seeing him all in a perspiration, she used a piece of calico as a handkerchief to wipe away the sweat of death from his forehead. This cloth, impregnated with the last perspiration of the holy Curé, constitutes a third authentic relic which the community of Dardilly preserves. At one time, flies were running over his face. As she was brushing them away, he said in a low tone: "Leave me my poor flies; there is nothing annoying but sin."

It is not only in Lyons nor at the gates of Lyons that we find the Sisters of Saint Joseph. It is in the West of France where they have given their devoted service since 1824. In 1812, the Sisters of Saint Joseph arrived in Aix-les-Bains to establish the school and hospital. Among the illustrious people who were taking the waters was the Countess de la Rochejaquelein. She had been forced to go into exile in Switzerland and live *incognito,* since she was connected by destiny with the royal family. Thus she was a witness of the beginnings and happy results of the foundations in Aix.

The countess was the daughter of the Duchesse de Duras d'Uzès in Touraine. Married quite young to the Prince of Talmont, a Vendean, she became a widow at the age of seventeen and, consequently, heir of her husband's estates. At her mother's death, she inherited more property and was thus very rich. A second marriage contracted with Count August de la Rochejaquelein, the youngest of three brothers of that name, made her a partaker in the vicissitudes of this ancient and aristocratic family. Exiled during the Revolution and the Empire, she returned to France under the Restoration. Remembering the good that was done in Aix by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the countess wanted them on her estate in Touraine and on her husband's in Vendée.

Napoleon called the Vendeans a race of giants. The countess wanted the Sisters of Saint Joseph to train those who were to be the mothers of these giants. Mother Saint John answered this request in 1824. A swarm from the large hive of the Chartreux was established in Ussé, in Touraine, and another one at Saint-Aubin-de-Baubigné in Vendée. The laws of secularization have not closed the school. At Ussé, in Touraine, the school is quite close to the castle in which the countess spent her childhood and last years. In 1837, Sister Marie Félicié Peillon was appointed Superior there. She governed the community for fifty-five years.

After Saint-Aubin and Ussé, still on the countess' property were opened other houses, Roche-de-Brand, Curzay, Maulévrier, la Gaubretière, Ligné and Huismes. Mother Saint John was happy to send her daughters to the Catholic provinces of the West. The noble Christian who asked for them and the saintly Religious who gave them understood and esteemed each other. Both seemed to have had an insight into the end of the century which caused a great bishop to say: "If there are no more men to save the world, there are still women and children. One can remake the world with Religious who pray and with the young girls who are brought up to become valiant women."

CHAPTER XIV

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

THE Institute which Mother Saint John restored with so much zeal and happiness, had received, at different times, the sanction of the government. In January, 1674, Louis XIV granted it *letters patent.* On April 10, 1812, Napoleon I admired, praised and approved its organization. On March 23, 1828, King Charles X legally authorized the Congregation of Saint Joseph of Lyons. These approvals were highly appreciated. Those of their Lordships and Bishops of Le Puy, Monsignor Henri de Maupas (March 10, 1651), and Armand de Béthune (September 23, 1665), Henri de Villars, Archbishop of Vienne (September 10, 1668), François de Neuville, Archbishop of Lyons and Primate of France (December 20, 1729) were still more appreciated. One favor above all others came in 1824 to rejoice the venerable Mother and her devoted daughters. His Holiness, Pope Leo XII, praised the congregation and on March 5, 1829, the Holy See in a letter of commendation addressed to Archbishop de Pins testified that the Institute of Saint Joseph of Lyons "is worthy of all praise." This praise gladdened the hearts of the Sisters.

In the midst of her joys and her holy undertakings, Mother Saint John suffered a privation which nothing could lighten. The motherhouse had no chapel and the heart of the Superior felt the ever increasing need of having her Lord constantly near her under her roof. She heard in the depth of her soul these words of Our Lord: "If you wish to be with Me, I wish to be with you." The virtuous Mother's heart answered: "Come, O Lord, and dwell with me."

The distance that separated the motherhouse from the beautiful church of Saint Bruno, where the Sisters went for their religious exercises, was not great. The present kitchen and refectory of the convent now occupy this site. Mother

Saint John loved this church. She enjoyed the imposing ceremonies which the numerous clergy of the House of Missionaries beautified; but where is the Religious who does not ardently wish to possess her Spouse under her roof? The Sisters, as well as their Mother, desired the Divine Presence. Their number had increased so much that they were obliged to take turns assisting at the different Masses in order to leave room for the faithful. As the community is to form but one body, the Sisters should say their prayers at the same time and in the same place. Since no motive of zeal justifies a division, they must have a chapel.

Money was lacking to build it. The Sisters did again as they always had done on occasions of pecuniary difficulties. Everybody devoted herself to work, to practise self-denial and to save. Without complaining, each one began the task, and, as God always helps those who help themselves, He inspired some friends of Mother Saint John to acts of generosity. Gifts were added to the proceeds of labor. The chapel was built and the postulants, novices, professed Sisters, Mother Saint John and the entire staff of the convent had lent a helping hand.

Mother Saint John's contemporaries said that she had the gift of doing much with very little. We have the proof of it, for she had but very little money when she built the chapel with fifteen thousand francs. The edifice, necessarily simple, was large:—one single, spacious nave, a beautiful sanctuary, a choir, rounded in the shape of a shell, two chapels, one dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the other to Saint Joseph, three marble altars and a gallery near the infirmary which permitted the sick to enjoy the presence of their sweet Consoler without descending to the chapel. It was simple but sufficient to make the entire congregation happy.

The first reception took place on August 12, 1826. It was very solemn. Never did the ceremony of receiving the habit seem more beautiful to the family of Saint Joseph. Mother Saint John and her daughters were delighted with this modest sanctuary where God poured so many blessings on the community. This chapel satisfied the needs of the community for thirty-one years. It has been replaced by a basilica with three spacious naves that are ornamented with rich paintings.

We read in Canon Rivaux: "The chapel built by Mother Saint John was for her what the ancient Tabernacle was for Moses." She went there frequently and could say like the prophet: "O Lord, God of my heart, I have cried to Thee day and night." The Lord was her helper in everything, her support, her consolation and her light. She plunged herself over and over again with love into the Heart of Jesus and returned with the charity, zeal and kindness of the Saviour. The daughters imitated the Mother; everybody took delight in remaining before the Tabernacle. They inhaled, as it were, a breath, a breeze from Heaven, which soared over their hearts and made them exhale a perfume of humility, piety and holiness which pervaded the whole convent. Jesus was the soul, the life and the spirit of all hearts. After the ravages and ruin of the Revolution, in the midst of the sufferings and extreme poverty of the commencement of the work, one is surprised at what Mother Saint John did and the manner in which she did it. Workmen and contractors were so pleased with the venerable Mother at her promptness in paying their wages, and the care she gave them during their work that they called her their mother just as did her daughters.

Mother Saint John now had the Source of all consolations near. She was going to have need of Him, for sorrows and trials were there waiting to sanctify, while bruising her. One does not become a saint without trials. Mother Saint John showed her sufferings very little; she rarely spoke of them, but she felt them deeply. First, it was Sister Saint Teresa, her own sister, who was taken away. When Mother Saint John was called to Saint-Etienne, Sister Saint Teresa remained at Bas to help her aged parents. Both had died: the mother on March 19, 1812, the father, on August 14, 1818. Her filial duty fulfilled, Sister Saint Teresa hastened to rejoin her sister. Sister Saint Teresa was not only for Mother Saint John a helper and a faithful, cherished companion, but she was, for the edification of all, the most humble and most obedient of her daughters and served as a model to everyone.

On December 13, 1825, God called to Himself this Sister whose departure was deeply felt. "Her youth was exemplary," we read in the obituary of the congregation. "She kept throughout her life the good opinion that was formed about her in her childhood. Persecution found her firm in the Faith. She confessed Christ with invincible courage and during nine months in prison, even the evening before she was to have been guillotined, she enjoyed inexpressible peace. The God of all consolations granted her what He had promised to those who are faithful to Him. This same God delivered her, as if by a miracle from those chains which she wore for Him. He knew the holy use she was to make of her liberty and of her life for the edification of her neighbors. Our novitiate especially profited by the rare example of her virtues. Our hearts, although distressed, are consoled by the hope of having one more patroness in Heaven. If she has been a support to us here below, with greater reason will she be so in the celestial Jerusalem."

This obituary was written during the lifetime of Mother Saint John by one very close to her, her assistant, Mother Saint Francis who died before her. These statements are the most authentic documents concerning the imprisonment and impending death of the Fontbonne Sisters. They destroy all improbabilities. These events took place in 1794, conformably to the tradition of the Institute. Prison records may be mislaid or incorrectly kept, but these lines are true. Mother Saint John, simple, virtuous, upright and intelligent, would not have tolerated a useless fable about their imprisonment to be kept in the archives of all the convents of the congregation. The obituary is sent very exactly every year in June and in December to all the convents of the Institute.

Sister Saint Teresa's death cast a veil of mourning over the motherhouse and the novitiate. A short time after this demise, another death caused sorrow. It was that of Sister Scholastica. She was gifted in the highest degree for discerning vocations and training hearts. On May 25, 1826, Sister Saint Ignace Chassing died. Mother Saint John felt these losses deeply. These were valuable assistants whom God took from her. Another death was particularly afflicting, that of Mother Saint Francis. "Mother Saint Francis was for me a gift from God," she said, "she supplied all my insufficiencies." The good Mother, although submissive to the will of God, shed abundant tears.

Mother Saint John had now to undergo another trial. The principal of the Lycée of Lyons wanted the Sisters of Saint Joseph for the infirmary and the linen room. He begged Father Cholleton to plead his cause with Mother Saint John. Father Cholleton made the request and advised her not to reject it. "The Sisters," the Vicar General said, "will have occasion to exercise excellent influence over both relatives and pupils in the infirmary as well as in the linen room."

Archbishop de Pins was absent from Lyons when the affair was being transacted between the Superior General and the Vicar General. On his return he showed displeasure with the concessions made to the Lycée. He blamed Mother Saint John, reprimanded her severely and accused her of lacking prudence and tact. The humble Superior who could have justified herself so easily, received the undeserved admonition silently. She accepted the reproaches, bearing all the blame and said not one word about the recommendation of Father Cholleton in favor of this work. Neither did he speak of it. God blessed this humility. The Sisters of Saint Joseph are still in the Lycée. They give an example of the modest devotion and of Christian charity. The apostolate of example has indeed its eloquence. The Sisters had a proof of it. Mother Saint John was no longer on earth when these events took place. We take the liberty to relate them because they justify the work undertaken by this good Mother.

At that time there were in Lyons among the pupils of the Lycée, two young Jews, twin brothers, Achille and Édouard Lémann. Born on April 18, 1836, these two boys had never known their mother, who died in giving them birth. Shortly after, their father died and the two orphans had been confided to the care of an uncle, an Israelite like themselves. The uncle lived in Lyons. The nephews were educated in the Lycée of this city.

In the beginning of his eighteenth year, Achille became seriously ill with smallpox. The authorities placed him in the infirmary, from which the danger drove everybody away; even the rabbi did not go near the contaminated place and the doctor gave his prescriptions from a distance. Two Sisters of Saint Joseph watched over this young sufferer with the tenderness of mothers. Day and night, regardless of danger, Mother Zéphirin or Sister Evarista remained at the bedside, lavishing on him constant and countless attentions. The warm-hearted devotion of the angels of charity, who took care of him with absolute forgetfulness of self, deeply impressed the patient and his brother. At first they felt admiration, then affection, confidence and entire surrender. In these two souls, which were but one, was born a feeling of gratitude that was never extinguished. The heroic act of charity, so simply performed by these two Sisters who exposed their lives for a young boy, whom they did not know, was the cause of their conversion to Catholicism. As their hearts opened to gratitude, their eyes were opened to the light of Faith.

Mother Zéphirin, guessed the secret workings of grace in these adolescent souls. Father Reuil, curate of Saint Nizier, was an apostle. She called him to her assistance. "That was enough," the Semaine Religieuse tells us. "Grace triumphed over the Talmud, the rabbi and the race." Achille, now Augustine, relates the succession of events:

"After God sent the fortunate malady that opened our eyes, we resolved with mutual consent to follow this way of Truth which His love traced for us, and, from that time, we began ardently to study the Old and New Law. Light soon rose, bright and radiant before us.

"Laying aside all feeling of self-love or fear, we swore an eternal love for Jesus and Mary. We were then in the Lycée of Lyons, where we were finishing our course in philosophy. We could hardly expect to attend to our religious instruction without being discovered. We placed ourselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. We were not mistaken in our trust. For one year, we worked on the Bible, particularly the Gospels and, although exposed to the gaze of about thirty fellow-students, never did one surprise us.

"We hoped to be baptized during vacation, but our family sent us to our grandfather to Mulhouse, in Alsace. As we could not remain for two months without seeing a priest, our good spiritual director, Father Reuil, gave us a letter to the parish priest of Mulhouse. There was, in Mulhouse, for a population of thirty thousand souls, but one Catholic church known to three thousand Jews who surrounded it. We ran great risk of being surprised. We invoked Mary and almost every day we could go to the venerable priest. We returned to college for six months. Then came the time for examinations. Our success surpassed our hopes. Free from all uneasiness and instructed enough in matters of religion, we prepared ourselves for Baptism." [1]

This touching ceremony took place on April 29, 1854, one Saturday of that glorious year of the promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. In the chapel of the Marist Fathers, at the foot of the hill of Fourvière, in the presence of Fathers Reuil, Colin and Aymard, the two Lémann brothers renounced Judaism. Father Reuil poured the regenerating waters over their heads, adding the name of Augustine to that of Achille and Joseph to that of Édouard. Later, the two brothers entered the Seminary of Saint Sulpice and were ordained in 1860. The parish of the Annunciation, at Vaise, had just been established in Lyons. Father Reuil asked for them as his curates, but the Fathers Lémann were made for preaching, thus they soon relinquished parish work for the pulpit.

"And for forty years, the church in her festivals
Thought their voices to be those of the prophets."

Death was to separate the two brothers. On June 8, 1909, Father Augustine contracted pneumonia. Toward three o'clock in the morning he sent for his confessor, asking him not to disturb his brother's sleep. On June 16, a telegram brought him the Holy Father's blessing, and on that day he died very peacefully.

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[1] Lettre d'Achille Lémann devenu Augustin après son baptême.

As it had been arranged in advance by the two brothers with the permission of the Archbishop of Lyons, and the Superior General, the remains of Father Reuil, Mother Zéphirin and Sister Evarista, were exhumed and taken to Saint-Sorlin, Rhone, to be interred with those of Father Augustine Lémann, in the same resting-place. Ten years later, the mortal remains of Monsignor Joseph Lémann joined them in the humble village cemetery. The spiritual family was then quite complete. The brother, the mothers and the sons, as the pious prelates were accustomed to say, rested together on earth and together praised God in Heaven. Without knowing it, Mother Saint John prepared this mystical union from afar. Her voice, we are certain, now mingles with their voices, in singing the eternal Hosanna before the throne of the Lamb.

CHAPTER XV

A DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENT

UPON your arrival at the intersection of Rue Jarente and Rue Vaubecour, in your journey from Bellecour to Perrache, you see on your left a large building bounded by four streets. You reach this building through Rue Jarente. If your heart tells you to do so, ring the bell. The door opens automatically and a Sister of Saint Joseph appears. You then know that you are in the establishment of the *Jeunes Incurables* of Ainay. If you visit the rooms, you will discover that some of the *Jeunes Incurables* are eighty years old. They were young when they were admitted, but years have passed without the disappearance of their infirmities.

Like all the other charitable establishments, this one has a very beautiful history which began without Sisters and ended with them. Adelaide Perrin, a modest Christian woman, established the work for the Incurables without intending it. Adelaide, or Adèle, was born in 1789. Her childhood knew neither thoughtlessness nor joyous sports. It was the time when, in all families of France, people trembled, wept and died.

Adèle was mature before her time. She liked neither pleasure nor dress. Her more frivolous and more turbulent companions showed her little sympathy. She found them annoying and removed herself from their games as often as possible. She suffered, for she had a tender soul and felt her isolation. Suffering does us good when it does not embitter us. She became very kind and sympathetic, because she suffered much. Adèle had neither fortune nor health. Her father's death increased the misfortunes, the sufferings and the privations of the family. She grieved so much that it was feared she would die. Fortunately she turned to God and drew from charity and religion the strength to live. To ease her sorrows, she gave herself to the unfortunate. She regulated her day, one part was reserved for the poor children whom she received in her home, the other, for the sick whom she visited in their own homes or in the hospital where the special vocation which God gave her was revealed.

One day in July, 1819, an unknown woman came to Adèle's home and asked to speak to her. She was not at home. The woman explained the desire of a sick girl in the Hôtel-Dieu. She had just undergone a long treatment for a disease of the joints and had not been cured. The rules of the Hôtel-Dieu forbade the keeping of the infirm. The patient was told that she had to leave the hospital. Not knowing where to go, she thought of appealing to the charity of her whom she saw visiting the rooms. She had made inquiries about her name and sent to her another charitable soul, a "Charlotte" perhaps.

Madame Perrin dismissed the stranger. Adèle warmly approved her mother's attitude. How could she help an invalid? The family could scarcely provide for itself. The unknown emissary was not discouraged; she came back a second and a third time. At last she met Mademoiselle Perrin and obtained from her the promise to see the girl in the hospital. She could have easily kept this promise, yet she made no effort to do so. Knowing the kind heart of the young girl, it is difficult to explain her delay in answering the call of an unfortunate being; so we may guess that it resulted only from the pain she felt at the thought that she must refuse her request.

One day, Adèle and her mother left their home to go in different directions. Having lost her keys, she could not return home since her mother was to be absent for several hours. She, therefore, decided to go to the hospital to see the sick girl, who had been waiting to be removed to the hospice, Saint Polycarp, through the kindness of Adèle. Her expectations were not in vain. The girl was transferred, and the infirmarian, after inquiring about the nature of the girl's disease, held out hope of a cure if she could take the treatments for three months. Similar cases had been presented with which they had had complete success. The Sister added: "We shall ask you for fifteen francs a month." Fifteen francs was rather a small amount, but she did not have fifteen francs. The timid Adèle resigned herself to the rôle of beggar. By this means she obtained enough money for two months' treatment. She paid for the third month with money which somebody returned to her; but the girl was not cured.

Three other young girls, afflicted with the same infirmity, had taken similar treatments without any success. There were then four young women unable to earn their living. This similarity of suffering bound them in ties of friendship. They conceived the plan of asking Mademoiselle Perrin to bring them to a room where, according to their strength and tastes, they could be occupied with different works to help in their support. She protested, assuring them that her position did not permit her to assume such a charge. Since her protests did not succeed in convincing them, she resolved to see them no more.

The hospice of Saint Polycarp was only a receiving hospital. For want of resources, those in charge kept neither the sick nor the infirm. The young girls had to leave. The Sisters were grieved, but they could not violate the rules. They begged Adèle not to abandon these unfortunate ones. The Sisters promised to lighten the burden by furnishing all the vegetables necessary for their subsistence and by giving toward their home a sum of three hundred francs which they had at their disposal. They pleaded the cause of these poor infirm girls with so much warmth that Mademoiselle Perrin resolved to speak to her mother about it. Madame Perrin thought it would be possible for her daughter to rent a room in Rue Saint Georges for six months. This room had to be furnished with the necessary housekeeping utensils. Divine Providence remained with her to ease the burden and to provide for their needs.

One of the four infirm could return to her family, the other three were received into the modest home. Mademoiselle Perrin asked them if they had some of the money and linen which had been given to them in the hospital. One admitted that she had twenty francs and was quite disposed to confide this money to her benefactress provided that nobody took it.

The second gave up six francs, declaring it was all her possessions. The third said she had nothing. This little sum of twenty-six francs seemed to satisfy the first needs of the society. An account was opened with the baker. Every day he brought them three pounds of bread for which they paid at the end of the week. They procured a little work, but all three were so feeble that they could not earn more than one franc a week. The work was maintained by the assistance given by charitable persons.

One day Adèle's purse was empty. She was in a state of great uneasiness. Divine Providence, as in the past, placed in her path a very rich and charitable woman. Mademoiselle Perrin spoke to her about the three invalids. The kind Christian woman took these poor girls under her protection, visited them every week, sent them food and gave them a little work for her home. As she was benefactress of these people who owed her their living, she paid little for this work reserving to herself to give, at great intervals, a large alms which more than made up the deficit.

At the end of six months, the benefactress decided to suspend her benefactions. At that time, a priest asked Mademoiselle Perrin to receive a fourth invalid who was a great care to her family. The lodging could hold one more bed. She was accepted. Resources were so uncertain that twenty times, Adèle was about to abandon her work; and each time Divine Providence sent provisions or money, always in a small quantity, but sufficient to satisfy the needs for the time being. The time came when all resources seemed exhausted. Fortunately, a charitable woman gave her fifty francs.

The work continued its progress through many difficulties, and more invalids were added to the number. A very young girl who was covered with sores was brought there. Adèle had to go to Rue Saint Georges several times a day to dress these sores. These repeated trips took time and were a real effort.

The Perrin family lived in Saint-Jean la Manécanterie at the top of which there were large granaries which, without much expense could be transformed into habitable rooms.

After receiving permission from her mother, she rented these granaries, furnished them and brought her invalids to them. It was easier for her to attend to them there without attracting attention.

A terrible trial forced her to leave them for a while and to retire to the country. Her mother had been obliged to go thither to a relative whom she served as companion and nurse. One day, Adèle learned that her mother was dangerously ill, and she had to leave without delay. When she arrived at her mother's bedside, she was grief stricken, for she understood at once that the dear patient's days were numbered. She lavished on this dear mother all the cares inspired by filial tenderness. Yet she did not forget her invalids. Let us listen to her: "I spent many nights at mother's bedside. Sorrow and fatigue had exhausted my strength. She noticed my weakness and begged me to take some rest. My brother watched with her. Calmed by the assurance of care, I fell into a deep sleep and in imagination I visited my poor *incurables.* I saw a great number of them, gathered in a large house and cared for by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, who made me enter a chapel. I followed them. They then showed me the cellars and the granaries where they had stored ample provisions."

At the sight of these riches, Adèle awoke. She needed a few moments to bring her back to reality. She felt much pain on discovering that it was only a dream and that the only real things were her poverty and her mother's illness. An hour later Madame Perrin was no more, but the dream was realized later.

Practically unnoticed during their mother's lifetime, Adèle and her brothers were sought by their relatives and friends after her death. As soon as they learned the sorrow of these children, these persons came to share their grief and from that time sought to draw them from it by proposing family gatherings. Adèle reveals to us in her Memoirs the motives to which she attributed this change of attitude. Her brothers were gifted with artistic talent. It was easy to foretell a brilliant future for them. However modest their present position, it was not wise to disregard them.

In reply to these advances, Adèle and her brothers sent an invitation to all their relatives, informing them that they would eagerly receive on a certain day of the week, the members of the family who would be willing to work for the poor. The ladies were to come to their house at five o'clock and their husbands or brothers were to call for them at nine. They would play cards together and the stakes would fill the purse for the poor. It was well understood that nobody would come in evening dress, and that everybody would go home at ten o'clock. "We had tables furnished with everything necessary for work. The guests assumed these tasks with pleasure and, at the second meeting, these ladies were delighted to bring other materials."

Before midwinter, a large supply of children's clothing was displayed as the fruit of these meetings, and there still remained a great quantity of material to be made into useful articles. Adèle coveted these fabrics. Her poor girls in the garrets needed bedclothes. She suggested that this cloth would be suitable for coverlets and she could find places for them. Her suggestion was followed.

Easter Monday came and with it, the closing session. Twelve little children entered. They were dressed in the clothes made by these ladies. Three of them opened the march carrying crowns of flowers which they placed at the feet of those designated. Others followed bearing baskets filled with bouquets of violets which they distributed to their benefactresses. There was deep emotion in the assembly. This feast, so novel and so touching was, without any doubt, the foundation for the Home of the *Incurables*.

The assembly then attended to the distribution of the coverlets. Mademoiselle Perrin proposed to give them to some poor girls of her acquaintance. The others agreed and drew lots to know who would take them, as three people would be sufficient. The result was not favorable to the one who deserved the honor. Adèle told them the address of the recipients who lived in the garrets of the house in which they had assembled. The next day the three who were chosen went to the garrets. They were greatly astonished at meeting invalids of all ages. They asked questions and everything was revealed.

Delighted with their discovery, these ladies made an appeal to all the members of the society who had helped to make the coverlets and, the next Wednesday, everybody was reunited at the Perrin home. They expressed the wish that the society be formed in a more solid and permanent manner for the support of the work. The members applauded this proposition and it was agreed that they appoint a council at once which would consist of fifteen members. They set a day when this council would meet again to consider means to be taken toward the foundation of a solid and durable establishment. Mademoiselle Perrin, who was bewildered, almost frightened at the turn events had taken, begged God to enlighten her, and she understood that she must trust Him as in the past.

The council which had just been formed had excellent intentions. "We wish," it said, "to establish a work which has God for its principle and end." Everything seemed to progress very well in the beginning. These ladies never failed to have a meeting on the date fixed. In the first assemblies, they drew up by-laws; then they busied themselves seeking a larger and more suitable place than the attics of the *manécanterie.* These garrets sheltered eight *incurables.* It was a small hospital which was to grow. The possibility for this must be supplied. They began to search for a suitable site. They found one at Ainay.

There was a vacant house in Rue Vaubecour. The owner consented to rent it for six hundred francs. The money box contained only three hundred francs, with which they had to provide for the support of the invalids. Continuing to rely on Divine Providence they rented it nevertheless. Gifts and invalids arrived. There were so many of the latter that the place was again too small. New responsibilities and new interventions of Divine Providence followed new anxieties. They rented another building, Maison Capelin; but it lent itself badly to the needs of the work, as it was divided into small rooms. Partitions would have to be torn down and the rooms arranged differently. They hesitated. To make such changes in a rented house that perhaps would not be suitable a few months later was foolishness. It would be better to buy the house and the land surrounding it, so as to be able to build and expand according to future needs.

Benefactors presented themselves and money, furniture and provisions came from everywhere. Among these benefactors they found people of both sexes, all religions and all mentalities. This mixture of men and women,—Catholics, Protestants, pious and worldly people, alarmed the priests who did not find the work to be of a sufficiently serious nature. Mademoiselle Perrin thought it a duty to visit Father Ferrand. The latter listened to her politely, coldly and said little. "That did not surprise me," the visitor said; "we were both somewhat stubborn and not a great amount of good was expected from our enterprise."

Thanks to the liberality of everybody, the house and the coveted land were bought. It was on this property, which had belonged to the Abbey of Ainay, that later they built the present establishment of the *Incurables.* This building is enclosed by four streets: namely, Rue Ramparts d'Ainay, Rue Vaubecour, Rue Jarente, Rue du Puits or better "du Puy" or Pic d'Ainay. The name Puits d'Ainay has been replaced by Adelaide Perrin. The house and the land surrounding it were obtained; but who was to have the interior direction? The Bishop did not have any confidence in this motley direction. Mademoiselle Perrin suffered. The council was obstinate. Several meetings were necessary for the discussion of this serious problem, as opinions were divided. Did Mademoiselle Perrin recall her dream? Perhaps she did. It was decided to ask the Sisters of Saint Joseph to take the interior management of the house.

Mother Saint John consented to give her daughters for this interesting and useful work. Three members of the council went to the rectory of Ainay to announce this good news to the priest. These ladies asked him to preside at the installation of the Religious. He accepted willingly and was present on the appointed day. The entire council was assembled. Father Ferrand, addressed the assembly with words which reached their hearts, because they came from his own. Mademoiselle Perrin and her council were encouraged in their devotion. The Religious and the invalids knew that they would find in the priest a father full of kindness, ready to give them advice and protection as often as they would come to seek them.

This was in 1825. The Sisters began their apostolate with faith and love. Their desire was to comfort both body and soul, for, if one suffers, it is rare that the other does not suffer also. Nothing seemed destined to oppose the realization of this apostolic desire. God's protection was visible. In proportion as the number of invalids increased, resources also increased. The Mayor of Lyons brought subscriptions from many royal persons. The Municipal Council, which had voted an annuity of one thousand francs, increased it to four thousand. Materially everything prospered.

There was a defect in the formation of the laws. The Sisters had been brought for the government of the interior; but Mademoiselle Perrin and her council reserved the entire direction to themselves. These ladies came there frequently, supervised and gave orders and permissions without consulting the Sisters. According to circumstances and caprices of the moment, the patients complained of the Religious to the council and vice versa. The two authorities neutralized each other, and this harmed the work considerably.

The Superior, realizing perfectly that no good was possible under such conditions, begged Mother Saint John to recall her. The latter recognized very well the weak spot in the organization but did not wish to do anything hastily. Seeing the discouragement of the Superior, she replaced her, with the hope that this change would bring about an improvement. It was not so, however. The departure of this Sister caused Mademoiselle Perrin deep sorrow. The direction remained as it was and the sick continued to bring their confidences, their complaints and their desires sometimes here, sometimes there. Decidedly, good was impossible; and bad feelings alone resulted from this situation.

The secular administration supported the work and directed it, but this work was done by the Sisters. It was necessary that the authority of the Religious be recognized and respected by everybody. Neither Mademoiselle Perrin nor her council could understand this. This lack of understanding so much thwarted the progress of this very beautiful work that Mother Saint John withdrew her Sisters.

For a time, Mademoiselle Perrin thought that her dream was realized. She saw now that this was far from true and, to replace the Sisters, had to have recourse to secular help. Mesdemoiselles Vacheron and Carron took the direction of the interior, an old nurse was added to the number and Mademoiselle Fauché, a teacher in a Lyonnais family, took charge of the catechism.

Here was an acute crisis. We shall use the Memoirs to relate it. "Father Ferrand and the curates had the kindness to come from time to time. They saw with pleasure the care that was given to this interesting class of the afflicted, but they made no mention of the society which attended to them." These ladies felt it, and to destroy this bad impression they asked the priest "to preside at their meetings." He consented, but his duties did not always permit him to be present. Mademoiselle Perrin said, when speaking of Mademoiselle Fauché: "Finding in her much learning and virtue, I spoke to her confidentially and I went sometimes to her home to have her share my uneasiness and my hopes and to ask her advice. During one of these conversations she told me that she had such affection for these poor sufferers that she intended to leave them her property."

A few days later, Mademoiselle Perrin, summoned to the episcopal residence, went there and found herself in the presence of Fathers Montagné and Cholleton, the Vicars General. Both received her kindly and spoke about her *Incurables* with the deepest interest, but they insisted on the necessity of giving this work a stable and religious character. They added that, appointed by the government to watch over the needs of the poor, it was for them to direct the establishments of charity and they presented to her a new set of rules signed by the Archbishop. The council did not accept these rules and Mademoiselle Perrin was received very coldly when she brought the answer to the Vicars General. Mademoiselle Fauché changed her mind with regard to the disposition of her property, ceased her coöperation and entered the Novitiate of the Chartreux.

Father Montagné, who had been given charge of the hospitals by the Archbishop, visited that of the *Incurables* and insisted upon certain changes, notably of giving the direction of it to a religious community, the ladies keeping charge of providing material assistance. The council did not accept. A delegation went to the Archbishop. A very animated discussion took place and since no one yielded, both parties withdrew discontented. This misunderstanding did harm to the house. Pious persons broke away from the work and its directress.

These difficulties, exhausting in themselves, did not stop Mademoiselle Perrin; more than ever she gave herself to her *Incurables*. The number of invalids was ever increasing and the Vicar General always spoke of the necessity of bringing a religious community there. Mesdemoiselles Vacheron and Carron were of the same opinion and both asked to be incorporated with the Institute which they would choose; they even invited Mademoiselle Perrin to join them.

An Institute having been designated, Mademoiselle Perrin decided to make application. She saw the Superior twice, and the assistant once. She was not admitted. The religious life was not her vocation. Her vocation was this long suffering, this sorrowful defiance and this momentary surrender, which purified her soul from its slight imperfections and which permitted her work to have all the signs which characterize duration: a humble origin, a progressive expansion, a long but unmoved resistance, tribulation and persistent trials.

Far from being discouraged at this fruitless attempt, Mademoiselle Perrin had faith in her mission and her hope of seeing it succeed increased. Renouncing all other cares she resolved to devote herself entirely to her invalids. On August 13, 1832, she installed herself in a modest room of the establishment where she lived until her death in 1838.

After Mademoiselle Perrin's death, the question of Religious was again agitated and this time the council decided that the interior government of the house be confided to the Daughters of Charity. As soon as they were installed, the Superior ordered from Paris a large statue of Saint Vincent de Paul for the entrance court. The case arrived. The Sisters hurried to open it, saluting their well-loved father in advance. They unpacked a statue of Saint Joseph, a fine Saint Joseph, with a grave manner, a little fatigued even, as if the journey had been painful. Disappointed, the Sisters repacked the statue and returned it to the statuary with the following note. "Sir, we did not order a statue of Saint Joseph, but one of Saint Vincent de Paul, our patron and founder. Please send us a statue of Saint Vincent de Paul."

A second crate came from Paris, and again they unpacked a statue of Saint Joseph. The Daughters of Charity, twice deceived, could not explain the double error of the statuary, but they dared not send back a second time the representation of the foster father of the Saviour. The statue of Saint Joseph remained in the house.

Six months later the Daughters of Charity left the house; and, after discussions and the necessary changes, Mother Saint John consented to give her daughters again. In 1839, the Sisters of Saint Joseph returned, this time to remain and do good. The statue of Saint Joseph is still in the court. A chaplain was later attached to the establishment, and his moral support has always been a great help in easing the lot of these poor invalids.

We do not say that there were no more trials. The home of the *Incurables* was not in Heaven. It was on earth and there are always trials on earth. In Ainay, there were trials in the beginning, some throughout its course and, no doubt, there will be more. In spite of the contradictions and the misunderstandings that have happened, this Christian and humanitarian work has always done good. After the holy foundress, there have always been at the Hospital for *Incurables* of Ainay, counsellors, Superiors, Religious, chaplains and invalids who have striven after holiness.

Today the dream of Mademoiselle Perrin is fully realized.

The establishment possesses a spacious house, in which as many as two hundred and fourteen infirm may be received at the same time. Twenty Sisters of Saint Joseph live there in perfect harmony with the council and give their care and their tenderness to these suffering guests. The Superior has the interior administration of the entire house and is responsible for each Sister and each patient spiritually. The chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, is in the center of the building. It is like the heart which sustains life. In it a marble slab has been erected to the memory of Louise Adelaide Perrin.

The Hospital for *Incurables* of Ainay had assumed unexpected proportions. The infirm presented themselves in such numbers that many had to be refused. This was a suffering for the sympathetic souls who succeeded the foundress. In order to meet this need, the administration thought, in 1844, of creating an auxiliary branch at the other end of the city, in Vaise. A large site was offered. It was poor, bare and far from the church, but for want of better, it was accepted.

The house was to be opened on November 2. Everything had been arranged for that date; but, by a series of providential circumstances, it could not be opened until the nineteenth, the day the Church celebrates the feast of Saint Elizabeth, patroness of the poor and infirm. It was under the protection of this illustrious saint that the Sisters and the *Incurables* entered their new home. This coincidence of the feast and the inauguration of the home decided its name which it still bears: "Providence of Saint Elizabeth."

As ever, the beginnings were painful and the pioneers had to overcome numerous difficulties. Everything was lacking in the house, and the Sisters found occasion of practising their vow of poverty in a very effective manner. The privation most keenly felt was the absence of a chapel and the distance from the church. When one has left all for God, one needs, in compensation, to have Him near, particularly in times of suffering. The sick, who were not able to go to church, were deprived of all spiritual help, even on Sundays.

This distress of soul troubled Father Magat, Superior of the

Institution Leydrade. Even though tramways did not exist and Leydrade was one hour's distance from Saint Elizabeth, Father Magat forgot the length of the way, the rain, the cold, the snow and the fatigue and came every Sunday and holy day, to bring to these poor invalids the consolation of assisting at Mass and of receiving Holy Communion. The Sisters were very grateful for this act of charity. Six months later, Mother Saint John's nephew, Father Fontbonne, returned from America, where he had been a missionary. He replaced the Superior of Leydrade and served temporarily as chaplain at Vaise.

God was busy with the new home as He had been with the former. Offerings and gifts came opportunely and in an unexpected manner. In a sale for charity, a single armchair brought about three thousand three hundred thirty-three francs. When at different times, the budget was encumbered with a heavy deficit, gifts or legacies always came to restore equilibrium. Two years after its foundation, the branch had twelve Sisters and one hundred twelve patients. The Revolution of 1848 cast this benevolent institution into disorder.

Among a group of *Incurables,* there were some more or less healthy. Those whose health did not permit them to earn their living, but who could do some light work, were received in Saint Elizabeth's. This occupation had a double advantage for the sick. It kept them from the ennui of idleness and permitted them to add a small amount of money to the budget. The winding of silk was proposed. It gave occupation to many until the February Revolution. Saint Elizabeth's was a convent, therefore, the revolutionary mob flocked there.

The first care, at the announcement of the danger, was to save the Blessed Sacrament from the profanation of this drunken mob. The Sisters took the ciborium to a neighboring house. Mademoiselle Comte went in haste to the hospital of which she was the treasurer. She received the fanatics and presented them to the invalids. In spite of their insanity, in the face of such misery, they became tender. After drinking some bottles of wine, they withdrew without doing any harm, but the workshops had to be closed.

The authorities were forced to suppress the work and to reduce the number of the patients. Forty invalids were sent back to their families. Temporary protectresses gave ten cents a day for each of the other invalids. This extra money was needed as the funds of the house were not sufficient to continue the shelter and the care of the invalids.

Up to that time Ainay and Vaise were under the same administration. The advantage of a separation was felt after this disturbance. Saint Elizabeth's had its own administration and, little by little, the number of patients increased to one hundred and twelve,—the number before the Revolution of 1848. In 1852, Providence Saint Elizabeth was transferred to Rue de la Claire, into the building it occupies today. Thanks to generous gifts the Sisters had one hundred sixty patients under their care.

This work, directed with wisdom and generosity, has increased in a providential manner. Madame Garnier-Aynard, foundress and first president, consecrated to it, for twenty-eight years, her thoughts, her time and her fortune. The invalids owe her, among other gifts, their country home, situated in Montée de Balmont, near enough to Rue de la Claire to enable the more infirm to go from time to time to breathe pure air.

We should like to name all the benefactresses who have contributed and who still contribute to this truly Christian work, but, it is impossible. Let us mention: Mademoiselle Delon who endowed the work with an income of ten thousand francs; Madame Chanoinesse Comtesse d'Herculais, who willed it ten thousand francs for unforeseen expenditures; Madame Vidal, one of the presidents, willed twenty thousand francs to the work. Generous gifts succeeded one another and many improvements were made.

Not far from Saint Elizabeth, in Vaise, Impasse des Jardins, the charitable Lyonnais opened a third Home for *Incurables,* the deaf and dumb. Again, the Sisters of Saint Joseph were asked to take charge.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

MOTHER SAINT JOHN had been well inspired in creating in Lyons her little Board of Charity. Her daughters could be seen everywhere; at the bedside of the dying, in the attics, in the smoky hovels, bringing help to the unfortunate, food to the starving, remedies to the sick, clothes to those who needed them and "mingling with bodily care spiritual alms" so necessary for those who suffer. Like a swan which goes along a marsh without wetting its wings, or without soiling itself, the Religious passed through the slime of vice, leaving after her a trace of purity and light. Her mission fulfilled, she came to reënkindle her heart near the maternal heart whose devotion was inexhaustible.

Mother Saint John never ceased to recommend the care of the infirm and the sick. "This charity, which was exercised with so much kindness towards strangers, was still more tender when it concerned her daughters when illness attacked them, and, particularly, in an epidemic which broke out in the motherhouse. During this sad trial, visits, vigils, remedies and the most celebrated doctors were not spared to check the plague. The kind Mother had the infirmary placed near her room in order to hear the least moan of her dear sick, to go promptly to their assistance and to be able to supervise more easily the application of the remedies. The number of patients was so great, that, in order to relieve the infirmarians, she sent an appeal to the Sisters in the local communities. Many came with the greatest haste, without the least fear of the terrible scourge. The good Mother was obliged to moderate their zeal and to choose a few from these angels of charity, who asked only to immolate themselves in caring for their Sisters.

"In spite of such tender care, many victims succumbed. The sorrow which Mother Saint John experienced drew tears from those who witnessed it. She did not cease praying to God for the cessation of the plague which desolated her spiritual family. She spent, at the foot of the crucifix or before the Tabernacle, short intervals of the time that was left after visiting and caring for her dear patients. She asked, for this intention, prayers at Fourvière, La Trappe, all communities in Lyons and from numerous fervent souls. Moved by so many supplications, God answered. The epidemic ceased its ravages, and sadness and desolation gave place to joy, gratitude and thanksgiving.

"Death was far from stopping or cooling the affection of the saintly Mother for her children. Her faith and love followed them into eternity. As soon as they had died, she recommended them to the Divine Mercy. In order to prepare them for this Divine Mercy, she never left the bedside of the sick or agonizing, encouraging them to suffer in a saintly manner. She showed them the crucifix as a model and Heaven as a reward. She assembled her daughters around the dying.

"It was a lesson and a warning for them and a consolation for those on their journey to eternity. It was thus that they loved and helped one another even to the end, as had their Master and Model. After praying with and for the dying, they redoubled their supplications until the last sigh. Not contented with praying for the deceased in the motherhouse, Mother Saint John called to the aid of the dear departed all the communities of the congregation and all other communities which she knew."

"We have read by the hundreds," Canon Rivaux said, "the letters of a piously afflicted Mother to her congregation. She wept for her cherished daughters, as Our Lord wept for Lazarus. The three fundamental virtues of our holy religion, Faith, Hope and Charity dominated all. With the purpose of assisting her dear and saintly deceased and to obtain their protection in Heaven, Mother Saint John had Masses said for them in the most venerated and privileged sanctuaries. Nothing is so beautiful, so sweet or so tenderly human as this Communion of Saints, which unites us again, after death, to those whom we have loved on earth."

The greatest union of hearts reigned in the motherhouse. There was no faction, no clique and no party spirit. The Sisters were united with one another and all were devoted to their Mother. The holy Superior never ceased to dwell on this union of hearts and the sacrifices necessary for it. She understood human nature. She knew that even in the most regular communities, differences of character exist; and she also knew the many sufferings that result from the common life. "No matter how saintly the people and no matter how happily ruled the monastery may be," says Monsignor Gay, "it is a laborious school of perfection. It is not a place filled with angels. It is not Heaven yet." Mother Saint John recalled this to her daughters and taught them the only means for seeing that a convent is still on earth and that they were to find suffering there. She reminded them that without suffering, one does nothing great and supernatural.

A holy bishop said: "Headaches, contradictions, sometimes even false friends and treasons are necessary. God's work is done in the midst of all that." The "Imitation" tells us: "In the Cross, is safety; in the Cross, life; in the Cross, protection against our enemies; in the Cross, heavenly sweetness; in the Cross, strength of soul; in the Cross, joy of spirit, consummation of virtue and perfection of holiness." [1]

An unexpected event was going to test the utility of this austere doctrine. Father Cholleton sent to the Novitiate of the Chartreux a postulant who gave the greatest hope, Mademoiselle F. She was pious and very talented, and could have been very useful in the progress of studies, whose standard the Sisters wished to raise higher.

The young girl was cordially received, made her postulancy in a satisfactory manner and received the habit with the name of Sister Marie Thaïs. Her venerable protector wished that she be employed in the novitiate as Mistress of Studies. Mother Saint John consented in condescension to him. Sister Marie Thaïs was a novice and was studied, warned and advised. Her Superiors realized that she did not possess, in a sufficient degree, the spirit of humility and simplicity indispensable to a Sister of Saint Joseph. When the time for profession came, in spite of her numerous qualities and real value, she did not make her vows. She had to wait in order to give time to the development of the virtues she lacked.

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[1] *Imitation:* II, 12.

Canon Rivaux who had been able to get in touch with Sister Marie Thaïs' contemporaries has written:

> "This mark of great confidence (employment in the novitiate) helped to increase the pride and natural self-sufficiency of the young protégée. Her mannerisms, her idle remarks, her pretensions, paraded everywhere even in the parlor with persons of the world, her entire conduct, was so little in conformity with the religious life that the Mistresses of Novices could not in conscience, in spite of their filial deference for venerable Father Cholleton, give a favorable decision for the profession of his young protégée."

The Vicar General was the Superior of the congregation. He showed his authority. Taxing the two mistresses, Sisters Febronia and Delphine Fontbonne, with prejudice and jealousy, he demanded their removal from the motherhouse, even selecting the places where they were to be sent.

Mother Saint John was deeply afflicted. This decision which fell on her like a thunderbolt, took, from her, loving and devoted assistants. It also disorganized her dear novitiate where Sister Marie Thaïs was to remain. The latter remained several years in the novitiate. She made her vows, but, after Mother Saint John's death, left the congregation and returned to the world.

The places chosen for the two victims were painful, difficult and little in accord with their talent and health. That of Sister Delphine could even be quite harmful to her. In spite of the repugnance that she felt, Mother Saint John thought it her duty to mention this to Father Cholleton and to ask him to choose another convent for Sister Delphine. She obtained this request.

She encouraged Sister Febronia in obedience. The Superior to whom she was sent had been prejudiced, which made the situation especially painful and delicate. Sister Febronia conducted herself with such a perfect religious spirit that the Superior's prejudices disappeared. Seized with remorse, she went one day to cast herself at Mother Saint John's feet begging her to forget the wrongs done to her niece and to leave with them one whose conduct and virtues had enlightened her and edified the entire community. As Canon Rivaux has remarked:

> "In the presence of her Superiors, not one of her daughters was so humble, so lowly and so submissive as the venerable Mother. Their will, their decisions and their least wishes were God's will for her. She would not omit an iota. Their blame, their severity, their rigor or their coldness she thought beneath what she deserved. 'Nothing raises or inspires confidence in authority like the practice of humility and obedience,' says the author of the 'Imitation.' Thus, with regard to the older Religious, it would be difficult to express with what respect and veneration they listened to the words and observed the recommendations of their respected Mother. They saw, in her will, that of God whom she represented and consulted on every occasion. Like Moses, she had recourse unceasingly to the Lord in prayer. Our Lord in the tabernacle was her Counsellor. After Jesus, Mary was her refuge. At the age of seventy, very often in the early morning in order not to be seen, she went fasting to Fourvière. She heard Mass and received Holy Communion and remained for a second Mass in thanksgiving. She returned to preside at the community exercises. The Sister who accompanied her and who she took care was not fasting, was told to keep these pilgrimages very secret. These habitual conversations with Heaven drew special graces upon her administration and gave to her authority a supernatural influence and efficacy."

Her deep, generous humility was not cowardice; it did not keep her from talking and commanding. While considering herself nothing, Mother Saint John remembered that she was something in the eyes of the world, that she had to carry before men the honor of God and that of her community. Her humility did not harm her office. She could decide and execute. She obeyed those who held God's place, and her subjects gave her that respect, veneration and filial obedience which she practised so well toward her Superiors.

CHAPTER XVII

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

BESIDES the communities to which we have devoted a more or less lengthy account, many houses were opened or placed under the authority of the Superior General. A long list of names would become fatiguing and what precedes suffices to give an idea of the prodigious growth of the Institute and the responsibility of the Superior General. It was like the springtime, everything budding at the same time, and He Who adorns the trees with leaves and flowers, covered, in a short time, our resuscitated France with religious communities. It is not always easy to find exact dates. Convents had been opened in Forez, Lyonnais, Bugey and Dauphiné, and everywhere Sisters were eagerly expected and joyfully welcomed.

In the Department of the Loire, a community was established on the ruins of the Château de Rochetaillée. In this city, as in many other places, the parish priest had united some young women who felt an attraction for the religious life. Each one had brought her small property, so that the community from its foundation was rich in several houses near one another. From this collection, a clever architect evolved unity and there resulted a real convent, of which Mother Euphrasia, who died at Jonzieux, was the first Superior.

In the beginning, the Sisters attended only to the poor and the sick, to whom they gave their care, their hearts and all they had, so that they became poorer than those they helped. They had nothing but debts. Debts are the bugbear of religious houses. Mother Saint John tried to remedy the situation. The Superior, made improvident by her charity and zeal, was replaced and sent to another convent.

The council decided that Sister Philomene Clavier would replace Mother Euphrasia. That was a heavy burden, as there was a debt of twenty-two thousand francs to be paid. On her arrival at Rochetaillée, she found closets devoid of clothing and a bill of one hundred francs to be paid within a few days. Those were the liabilities; for the resources there were sixty francs and an extra pair of sheets.

The date of maturity of the bill arrived, but no help had come. Sister Philomene went to put a closet in order and saw something bright on the floor. She found there the one hundred francs needed to pay the bill. Thanks to this assistance from Heaven, the conditions improved. Rochetaillée had a free school, a pay school and a prosperous boarding-school. Since the laws of secularization, there is no longer any school, but the Sisters still find good to be done.

Mother Saint John went as often as possible to reanimate the convents she had established or adopted. Since we are in the region of Forez, we shall remain for a time. From Rochetaillée, we shall proceed to Saint Victor-sur-Loire, which is not far from Saint Etienne. Saint Victor had had a convent of Saint Joseph since 1784. The revolutionary tornado carried off this convent. After the tempest abated, Marguerite Satre, the Superior, wishing to reorganize the community, had to reunite her companions in a different place. Sister Saint Bernard Beneyton replaced Marguerite Satre as Superior, and built the present convent on the ruins of the old castle of Saint Victor.

The castle and fief of Entremont, in the parish of Saint-Victor-sur-Loire, as well as the castles of Baralliêre, of Côte de la Tribonnière, of La Font, with their inclosures and all their dependencies, had been sold, in 1771, to Claude Marcoux, an ancestor of Sister Saint John Marcoux, by Gaspard de Courthille, Baron of Giac, Villeneuve and other places. The buyers had to pay for all seigniorial rights, to clear all debts and to pay an income to the widow of the Lord of Entremont. The present sale was made on the condition that neither Claude Marcoux nor his descendants could bear the name. The baron had sold his lands but not his title. These conditions had been perfectly fulfilled by the purchaser, who left his domains to his son. This son sold the ruins of the Castle of Saint Victor to the Sisters of Saint Joseph to build their convent in 1821.

On April 15, 1841, M. Faure, the Director of Domains, sent a letter to the Superior demanding that one-fourth of the value of the property be paid to the treasury under penalty of forfeiture, according to the laws of March 4, 1799, February 3, 1800, and January 22, 1802. Mother Saint Brigitte Granger answered that the Sisters were proprietors only of the ruins of the Castle of Saint Victor, and that Sister Marcoux enjoyed this property as heir of her father, the late Claude Marcoux. On July 31, the Sisters received an answer telling them that by the decision of the Minister of Finances, the effect of the summons was abandoned.

The road which leaves Firminy is dotted with convents of Saint Joseph in which Mother Saint John enjoyed consolations. Let us follow her and continue to enlighten ourselves, because the origins of the Institute must assuredly have an attraction for the Sisters who love it. At first there is Saint Maurice-en-Gourgois. By order of Cardinal Tencin, in 1749, the Sisters of Saint Joseph were established in the parish to teach young girls and to care for the sick. During the Revolution, the convent was sold, but the Superior, Anne Quéréron, protested so strongly that she was heard. The property was her patrimonial estate, her certificates proved it and she had not lost any of the civil rights since she had not taken solemn vows.

The tribunal of Montbrison, charged with examining the affair, gave a judgment which might be summed up thus: Simple vows of religion, binding only in conscience, are not recognized by the government. Under the Old Régime, Anne Quéréron could marry, inherit and acquire property. The sale of her property, as she had always kept her civil state, was consequently annulled. When peace was restored to the Church, good works were resumed in this Christian parish, whose fervor increased.

At Saint Maurice, everything was progressing well for the girls, but there was no school for the boys. With the necessary permission, Anne Quéréron gave one of her fields as a site for the much needed building, on the express condition that this school be conducted by an Institute of Brothers. We know how this clause was respected later.

The time came when the property of the Sisters of Saint Joseph no longer met their needs. The Sisters had built a new house and chapel, surrounded by an inclosing wall, where the children found space, moral and religious training, devotion and affection. Everything was taken from them later. Today the Sisters are alone in this large building.

The distance from Saint Maurice to Saint Hilaire is quickly traveled. Mother Saint John's heart surely had an attraction for that place, for, when the storm broke, Sister Alexis Payrard, the young novice arrested at Tiranges and led to Montfranc, lived there. Bearer of the good God, she had brightened the prison, rejoiced souls and shared the imprisonment of Mother Saint John. The tempest calmed, she returned to her convent of Saint Hilaire where she spent the remainder of her life. Memories such as these were consoling for both Mother and daughter.

One should hear two venerable old Sisters, who take care of the convent since the new tyrannies emptied it, speak of Mother Saint John and Sister Alexis, of the prisons and of the consecrated Hosts hidden in her pocket. What faith, what feeling and what emotion they put into their narration. Their predecessors had told them these touching events so often that they believe they have lived them. They think, perhaps, they are still living them. Even yet, when listening to them, our souls are deeply stirred.

The Superior of Saint Hilaire, Sister Augustine Petit, claimed her property that had been confiscated. The court of Montbrison gave practically the same judgment as that of Saint Maurice. This restitution permitted the Sisters to reorganize the community and its works in this eminently religious parish which was backward with respect to education. A young girl of Saint Hilaire, Mademoiselle Boyet, who felt called to the religious life, was sent to the Novitiate of Micarême where she received instruction as well as religious training. She returned to her own parish and was placed at the head of the school.

Under her direction, the children made such progress in learning and virtue that her delighted companions asked for her as Superior. The request was granted; and the community, which she governed for thirty years, prospered in every way.

We have said that Mother Saint John had communities along this entire route. We are now in Apinac which has had Sisters since 1691. The Revolution disturbed them very little. They quickly resumed the instruction of young girls. The corporal and spiritual helps which they gave the sick, had never been interrupted. Mother Saint John loved these good parishes of Forez which had preserved the Faith and to which we partly owe the reëstablishment of religion. One of the Superiors of Apinac, after the Revolution, enriched the chapel with several sacred vessels, reliquaries, statues, adornments for the repositories and vestments for Mass and Benediction. Today a free school functions in the Sisters' convent and the parish meetings take place in their large chapel whose principal door opens on the court, permitting people to enter without interfering with the community. The Sisters have for their use a special door which opens into a gallery. They may thus, without going downstairs, make frequent visits to their Divine Friend.

After Apinac, still following the beautiful road, one reaches the Bourg of Estivareilles. This modest town had been the seat of an administrative district of the Count of Forez and of a flourishing priory which depended on the Abbey of Ainay in 1153 and prospered there until the Revolution. "The monks," d'Héricourt says, "having important farms in the country managed them by sending there a certain number of Religious who had care of the temporalities and celebrated Divine Services in a domestic chapel. Pope Pascal II, in 1115, ordered the monks to return to their cloister and to cede their places to secular priests while assuring their support. Instead of the prior and the monks, Estivareilles had an irremovable parish priest and associate priests."

This priory or parish of Estivareilles was governed in 1802 by Father Richard. About this time, three pious young girls had the desire to unite and work together for the glory of God and the service of their neighbor. We are ignorant as to whether Father Richard was the originator of this plan, or if he received their confidence. We know that he approved and favored the project of those who were going to become his valuable auxiliaries. We believe even that he interceded with the Lord of La Goutte, to obtain a house which would permit them to come together to follow the noble aspirations of their souls. The Lord of La Goutte gave, for the charitable work which they desired to undertake, an inclosure including a house, a meadow and some land. This property occupied the site of the present convent.

At once, the three associates gathered the children of the parish and two of them began their instructions while the third visited the poor and took care of the sick. The inhabitants of Estivareilles were delighted with an innovation which rendered them real services; but those whose devotion they blessed were not satisfied. They aspired to something else. The religious life was necessary to them. Father Richard knew this desire, and yet was not in a hurry to satisfy it. To test their vocation still further, he gave them a Rule of life which was none other than the Rule of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The three virtuous Christians were living as Religious, although they wore a secular garb.

Father Richard was succeeded by Father Beyssac. The latter judging the trial sufficient, solicited, together with his Bishop, the admission of the three associates into the Congregation of Saint Joseph whose Rule they had faithfully observed for two years. Responding to this request, in 1710, Bishop de la Roche-Aymon authorized Marie Thiolière, Catherine Cerizier and Marguerite Aubert to form a community and to wear the habit of the Institute of which he was Ecclesiastical Superior, and he delegated the parish priest to represent him. The ordinance of the venerated prelate is piously kept in the archives of the convent.

After the reception of the habit, Marie Thiolière was appointed Superior of the little community which soon increased in numbers. As subjects became numerous, the convent was enlarged and a chapel was built in which the Sisters received the holy habit, pronounced their vows and in whose vaults they sleep their last sleep. Thirteen Sisters are buried there, among them, the Superior, Marie Thiolière, who died in 1743.

A fire that broke out during the night of January 12, 1787, almost completely destroyed the Bourg of Estivareilles. In less than three hours, thirty houses were burned. Some of them contained money, valuable furniture and precious objects. This catastrophe, coming in the middle of winter in a very cold country, was a real disaster. The roof of the church fell in and the rectory was entirely destroyed. The worthy and respected priest, more than eighty years old, barely escaped death in the flames and saw all his possessions disappear. The convent, as it was outside the borough, was saved, but the Revolution carried away what the fire did not destroy. During these dismal days, the Sisters had to take off their habits or return to their families. Some were imprisoned in Feurs. They had much to suffer. One morning one of them was found dead in the prison.

After July 27, when the laws became more lenient, the Sisters thought of uniting again, but they had no home as their property had been sold. One of the buyers consented to return the part he had bought, if he were given the sum he had paid. The other part was lost forever, because the man who had it in his possession would not sell it.

Under the Old Régime, Estivareilles belonged to the Diocese of Le Puy. At the time of the division of France into Departments, it was attached to the Archdiocese of Lyons. Like all the other divisions of France, Estivareilles had its constitutional priest, the intruder Jacques Chappont. Fortunately, to restore the ruins, God sent Father Bard, a zealous and pious priest, who gave his whole soul to the work of reconstruction. The rectory, which had been destroyed by the fire of 1787, was not yet rebuilt. Father Bard had great difficulty to find a home in the parish. This holy priest, delegated by his Bishop, directed the community with complete devotion until 1825, when the Sisters had the sorrow of losing him. He was buried beneath the chapel. The entire borough mourned for him and venerated his memory. In hours of distress, the grandchildren of those who knew him, still come to kneel at his tomb. Their prayers, they say, do not remain unheard; they even speak of miracles.

In gratitude for the benefits they have received, the inhabitants of Estivareilles erected a monument in the Sisters' chapel. One may read on the wall over the tomb,

> "Father Bard, Parish Priest of Estivareilles
> "To God his life,
> "To the poor his wealth."

This short epitaph is worth more than a long discourse. After the death of the worthy priest, the community was placed under the authority of the Motherhouse of Lyons and gave Mother Saint John great consolation by its charity, fervor and zeal.

Archbishop de Bonald, who visited it in 1840, spoke with admiration of the very fervent community. In this house, the Sisters gave themselves unselfishly to the care of youth and the sick until the laws of secularization closed the school. God we hope will give back prosperity to this soil on which so many virtues have grown.

At each journey that she made to the region of Forez, Mother Saint John visited Saint-Etienne. She went to Micarême which had attained a marvelous growth under the wise direction of the virtuous Mother Sacred Heart. At a date that we have not been able to ascertain, but when Saint-Etienne was still only a subprefecture of the Department of the Loire, the inhabitants of Valbenoîte had invited the Sisters of Saint Joseph to their commune. The community was installed, temporarily, in a house that was placed at the service of the sick and poor by a generous Christian. In 1818, Mother Saint Joseph Drevet and fourteen Sisters attended to the sick, the school for girls, the direction of a workshop, the care of the sacristy and other duties.

The community had to change its home for various reasons. On October 2, 1829, the Superior at Saint-Etienne went to the office of M. Saint Cyr, the notary, with Father Rouchon, parish priest of Valbenoîte, and two bachelors, M. Benevent and M. Dufour. The three clients came to give to the Sisters of Saint Joseph the houses and land necessary for the erection of a large establishment of their community. This property had formerly belonged to the Abbey of the Barnabites, who were dispersed by the Revolution. As this property seemed not sufficient for the extensive works of Valbenoîte, Father Rouchon gave almost twenty thousand francs to procure a life annuity for the Sisters.

The Society of Marist Fathers had established a college close to the community of Saint Joseph, still on the lands of the abbey. One day the pupils decided to erect a statue of the Blessed Virgin in the center of the garden. There was a circular pond, a little more than three feet deep. They emptied it, threw in some pebbles and filled in the rest with ashes and hardened soil. Stakes were erected to keep the base at the height of three feet. The children sowed grass and flowers, placed stones one upon the other without any cement and placed a rectangular stone on top. Upon this pedestal they put the statue of the Blessed Virgin. This statue has its history.

The Abbey of Valbenoîte was built along the Furens River which crosses Saint-Etienne. The city is not in danger at present because the river is arched. This was not the condition at that time and the river often became, on days of abundant rains, a raging torrent which filled those who lived along its banks with real terror. Sister Anne Séraphie Proriol, who was formerly one of the young boarders, recalls a childhood memory on this subject.

"On July 10, 1849, the water overflowed like an avalanche and flooded the ground floor. It lifted the tables in the refectory, the desks in the classrooms and it rose to the ceiling. Hurriedly the Sisters made the children go to the upper floors, but the water rose with them. Teachers and children, assembled in a large room, prayed fervently. Each one thought her last hour had come. Providentially, a priest was there. Overtaken, while in the house by the sudden bursting of the waterspout, he was not able to go away.

"One of the older pupils, seventeen or eighteen years old, cast herself at the feet of the priest, Father Gallet, and begged him to hear her confession. The other pupils followed her example. The priest calmed this nervous girl, excited all to contrition and gave general absolution.

"I was quite resigned to die," said Sister Anne Séraphie. "My family lived in this section and, as I believed all my relatives dead, I was not anxious to survive them. At last, quite near a niche in which there was a small statue of the Blessed Virgin, the water found an outlet and flowed into the streets. It had caused great damage to the convent but nobody perished."

The *Gazette de Lyon* published on July 15, 1849, an article entitled the "Virgin of Valbenoîte."

> "In the disaster which has just struck the city of Saint-Etienne and the upper course of the Furens, one thing, among all others, has had the distinction of silencing all dissent, and producing, in even the most skeptical minds, a single sentiment of Christian Faith. There is no human explanation of the occurrence which has just been witnessed in a city of fifty thousand people.
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> "In the center of the garden of the Marist Fathers of Valbenoîte there exists a little mound of earth, about three feet high and six feet at the base, crowned with several stones forming a shaft a little less than three feet high. These rough stones without any cement serve as a pedestal for a polished plaster statue of the Blessed Virgin, patroness of the Congregation of the Marists.
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> "The garden, in which this statue is placed, is surrounded by a solid wall about ten feet high. It was planted with vigorous elms and around the mound, serving as a base, were boxes of shrubs. Trees, wall, boxes and shrubs were swept away by the flood. The frail plaster statue, resting on a still frailer support, was not disturbed. The eye-witnesses who could be counted by the thousands, hardly believed what they saw."

Later the Marist Fathers gave their property of Valbenoîte to the Marist Brothers who opened a boarding-school when the college was transferred to Saint-Chamond. In this college, where one finds the statue so miraculously preserved, there is also a community of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. We are not going to visit that one now. At Saint-Etienne other convents of fervor and devotion reanimate souls and comfort bodies. We shall visit them.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN FEAR OF THE MOB

IF, upon your arrival at Saint-Etienne, you ask a passer-by to direct you to the convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph called the Pieux Secours, it is probable that he will not know how to do so, but if you ask him for the convent of the *Queen* he will know. You think perhaps that this stately name is due to royal munificence. Nothing is less true. She, whose name has remained so popular in Saint-Etienne that the people have not been able to separate it from the convent, was the foundress and first Superior. Reine Françon was a poor girl who suffered much and who drew from her personal sufferings the means for preventing those of others.

We shall tell you very briefly the history of this little girl and you will then know the history of her convent. Reine Françon, born in 1770 at Rochepaule, was one of eleven children of poor and honest working-people. They were upright Christians who formed their numerous family on their own pattern. In spite of pecuniary difficulties, all went well in the household. In 1774, a fire broke out and the modest property of the family disappeared in the flames. They were so completely ruined that they had to leave the country and find, near the city, the means for feeding the eleven birds in the nest.

Reine was only four years old at the time of the disaster. Her health was poor and her childhood was subjected to many privations; but the tenderness of her parents kept her from feeling them too much. At the age of ten she truly began to suffer because she had to leave her family to earn her living. Her parents took her to Saint-Etienne to a woman whom they did not know but who had been recommended to them. Reine was to learn the winding of silk at her house.

This woman was a hypocrite, who inspired the parents with confidence. They went home happy, thinking they had left their dear daughter with a second mother, while, in reality, they left her in the hands of a hard, selfish woman and what was still sadder, a depraved one. She demanded from this weak little girl, endless days without a moment's relaxation; and when she allowed her to rest or to sleep, poor little Reine had to spend the night on a chair, for the shrew had no bed to give her and did not even think of preparing any kind of pallet to permit the little one to lie down.

This little child's heart felt very much the inhumanity of such treatment; and yet we must admire her heroism, for she never spoke of this to her parents. She knew they had difficulties, that they were overburdened with work and cares, and she did not wish to add to their troubles by being an extra burden. On the contrary, she wanted to learn how to work in order to help them.

Reine was intelligent. She soon understood that inexpressible things were happening in the house. She kept from evil. When she compared the place where she was and the family fireside she had left, her sufferings were painful; and the more evil she saw, the better she became. In this house, where a hundred others would have been lost, Reine learned the secret of her vocation. "I will consecrate my life to little girls deprived of their parents as I." She related later that she spent nights searching for means that she could use to protect these children from the dangers that threatened them.

When she left this house, certainly without any regret, she thought only of helping her parents. We must believe that if natural energy sustained her, God did so very particularly. The extraordinary love that she had for her parents rendered her capable of efforts which her health would not have permitted. They, after raising their large family, were, before old age, confined to their home through infirmities. Reine, who had never married, took charge of her parents. She worked during the day and a part of the night in order to give them a little more comfort, very often depriving herself of necessities.

It may be said that Reine was a victim of filial duty. When her parents died in 1820, she thought of her special vocation.

She had never lost sight of it, but had waited to follow it until she was relieved of a more urgent duty. Reine was no longer young, but does one cease being young while he has courage in his heart? Reine loved as at twenty, without knowing them, these young girls whom she wished to save and to make happy as far as it was in her power.

She was without fortune and credit, but she relied on God and did not spare herself. Into the modest home where she lived, Rue de la Loire, she took a poor child whose parents had just been disgraced by a rather heavy prison sentence. After this one, another and still others, so many that in 1821 Reine Françon had received twenty children. She sheltered, clothed and taught them and provided beds for them. Nothing made Reine lose courage. She expected all from God and let herself be hindered by no fear. Events proved that she was right.

Example attracts. Other people had the desire to devote themselves. They came to join Reine and, on January 1, 1822, the work was regularly established. The register of the home began on November 1, 1821. The first child registered that day, Marie Davier, never left there. The fiftieth anniversary of her entrance was celebrated on November 1, 1871.

To continue the work and to allow it to develop, another site was necessary. A favorable place presented itself in Rue de la Paix. Reine had no money. Trusting in God Who always had some and Who gives to His own when they need it, she bought the land. Realizing that her work would not be lasting if it were not affiliated with a religious community, she applied for admission into the Congregation of Saint Joseph. She entered, received the habit and made her vows in 1823. She was fifty-three years old and had her entire life to recommend her. Mother Saint John retained her at the work that she had commenced so well and which she continued equally as well. At the time of reception, she received the name Sister Francis Regis. At Saint-Etienne, the people knew her as Sister Reine and the home to which she gave the name Pieux Secours was always designated the *Couvent de la Reine.*

When Reine entered the Institute, the land was bought but it was not paid for. And then, land did not suffice. A house was needed, hence the necessity for finding a great deal of money. Where would she find it? Reine could not say. However, the foundations were laid almost at once. There were murmurs, contradictions and sufferings. Reine bore all and the work progressed. Unexpected gifts, which seemed to fall from Heaven, came. The greatest gifts came from those who still remain unknown. How beautiful, in God's sight, must be the gift which has no label save that of His Divine Providence.

Large buildings were erected. They entailed considerable expense, but the enterprise was brought to a successful end and Reine endowed her children with a magnificent home. We read in the archives: "At Saint-Etienne, there were souls who understood her devotion and who honored themselves when honoring her." The Gold Book of the house tells us that Madame Jacquemond, Messieurs Collin, Royet, Peyret-Lallier and Doctor Soviche were the devoted friends in the beginning and loaned large sums of money, without interest, to this worthy Superior. Nobody associated herself with this work with more zeal than Mademoiselle Fanny Balaÿ, justly considered the second mother of the Pieux Secours.

Doubtless, the orphans worked in the house, for the Sisters wished to put them in a position to earn their living, and the simplest, surest way of finding occupation in later life is to know the industry of the district. At Saint-Etienne, the winding and weaving of silk permitted women to work at home. Looms, reels and spinning-wheels had been installed in the house; but it was easily understood that the work would not be sufficient for the maintenance of such establishments. It is no small matter to support and educate children between the ages of six and thirteen.

Reine had moments of anguish. In times of unemployment or commercial crises, the inmates of institutions were threatened with starvation. The Mother's heart was torn but she hid her uneasiness and relied more strongly than ever on Him who never fails the orphan. "Have confidence, my children," she said to her community, even when she knew that the house had neither money nor provisions for the next day's dinner. On the next day, there would arrive opportunely potatoes, rice, beans and oil. At other times it was pieces of linen or cotton cloth, tickets for coal to be delivered by a Mining Company of Montrambert, a legacy, a collation in the city or country offered to the children by a rich family; in fact, all charitable surprises, so numerous in Saint-Etienne. Then thanksgivings rang through the house, thanks which rose to Heaven, and confidence increased with gratitude.

The good work which was done in Reine's establishment was so manifest that it attracted the attention of the public administrations. The Municipal Council and the Minister of the Interior voted it an allowance. The French Academy, in August, 1829, awarded to Reine Françon a medal and the Monthyon Prize of five thousand francs.

The dream of the valiant Sister was to have the house self-supporting and she worked many years to realize it. On December 17, 1842, she was stricken with a disease that carried her away in three days. The noble Superior left in the home which she had established twenty-seven Sisters and one hundred thirty-five orphans. Her obsequies were a triumph. They took place on December 22 and furnished the inhabitants of Saint-Etienne the occasion of a tribute of respect and devotion. To honor the deceased and her assistants, the Municipal Administration granted, in perpetuity, a free plot in the cemetery for the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Pieux Secours. Public opinion consecrated the benevolence of the deceased by connecting her name with the home she established.

Six years later, France was in open revolution. As everyone knows, revolutions always destroy what they should respect. Reine's work was destroyed. On February 23, 1848, a temporary government took the place of the overthrown monarchy and M. Beaune, in his capacity as extraordinary commissioner, was vested with full administrative powers in the Department of the Loire. Some days later, he had the seals affixed to the machinery in Reine's home.

M. Royet, chief of the permanent commission, fought against this iniquitous measure. On March 13, he succeeded in having the seals removed. On March 14, M. Vialleton, Justice of the Peace, proceeded to the execution of the command. On March 15, M. Beaune authorized the Sisters to resume the work. Mother Mary Claire, who succeeded Mother Reine, did not deem it prudent to resume it. She felt too much disturbance in the air and did not want any silk in the house. She congratulated herself on April 14, when at half-past two in the afternoon, groups of men, women and street boys in rags began to gather at the entrance to the providence. What did they want? Nobody knew. Popular committees had been formed in Saint-Etienne against the work of religious communities. Some fanatics had succeeded in convincing the working-men that orphanages and homes for abandoned children harmed their interests.

The working-men, massed in front of Reine's home, gave themselves up to hostile and tumultuous manifestations, echo of the provocations and declamations of the popular committees. M. Royet, chief of the municipality, saw the storm approach and wished to reserve an establishment which the entire population loved and honored. To this end, he had posted on the walls of the city, the following proclamation: "Citizens, the safety of the city calls brave men to defend it. Assemble armed, in the City Hall where your magistrates await you."

At once, honest men took their guns and left their homes, but M. Beaune was not at his post. What could they do without cartridges, without orders and without authority as the one who commanded power was absent? The riot became more threatening. Doctor Soviche, warned of the danger, hastened with some of the National Guards. He stationed his men in the interior of the convent and placed himself in front of the outer door and harangued the mob, recalled all the services that this house had rendered, all those it was yet to render.

In spite of the vigilance exercised by the friends of the establishment, two women succeeded in entering. Doctor Soviche gave orders to make them prisoners, but, feeling that he would soon be outflanked, he hastened to the City Hall to ask for help. Hardly had he left, when three people, elegantly dressed, presented themselves and asked to be allowd to enter. One was a girl with a tricolor scarf. The Superior, taking them for magistrates had the door opened. They entered and were followed by five men and about fifteen women carrying an unfurled red flag.

Without any order or authority whatever, these twenty-three intruders devoted themselves to the most minute investigations in the workshops. All searches were in vain, for there was no material for weaving nor winding, not even any silk in the house. Seeing this, they departed. The patience of the crowd was at an end. Tired of waiting, the working-men broke in the door and entered the workshop. At once looms, spinning-wheels and reels were shattered, carried out, thrown into the yard and burned. They broke the furniture, tore down the doors, piled them with linen and provisions and the fire destroyed everything. These wild scenes began at three o'clock and lasted more than two hours. How long these hours of frenzy were for the Sisters who saw all their property destroyed. How short they were to be able to destroy the twenty-eight years of toil, devotion and sacrifice. Trembling and expecting worse misfortunes, the Sisters and the children took refuge in the chapel. They were not hurt but the orphans had to leave the house. Mother Mary Claire sent them to honest, charitable families who were willing to care for them while waiting to house them elsewhere.

"Honest men, in a depressed silence, looked at the mob passing and did not interfere. The National Guards, spit upon and insulted, without direction and cartridges, assisted at these devastations with guns on their shoulders." [1]

On April 21, when passions were seemingly calmed, the key of their house was returned to the Sisters but nothing remained. Worse still, they were permitted to occupy only a small part. The government had considered it favorable to transform the convent into a barracks. The dragoons and the infantry remained there almost five years. The Sisters who built the house had to be contented with the corner left them and in order to feel safe, they had the communicating doors and windows walled up. They housed some of the orphans in an annex as soon as their resources permitted. The work was resumed and God helped. The labor of so many sacrifices was revived little by little and still lives.

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[1] Papiers de M. l'Abbé Chausse.

After the destruction of the admirable work of the Pieux Secours, or more familiarly the Providence de la Reine, the incendiaries hastened to the Refuge to commit another crime. At each step the crowd increased, either from curiosity or to join the ranks of the plunderers. Having arrived at the Refuge, some of the fanatics broke in the doors, pulled down the partitions and tore the wainscoting from the walls while others broke the looms and gave to the fire whatever came under their hands,—furniture, linen, clothes, kitchen utensils, food, books and pictures. In their insane rage, they went so far as to tear up the trees and vegetables in the garden to burn them. And yet the Refuge deserved respect and protection.

The first idea of this shelter for destitute girls is due to Father Robert, curate of Saint-Etienne. Mesdames David and Foujols may be considered the real foundresses. They rented a house in Rue des Deux Amis to assure the safety of poor girls; but as their family duties did not permit them to take the direction of the work themselves, they looked for substitutes.

Madame David had among her workers, Marguerite Vallat, Reine Françon's cousin. She suggested to her the idea of imitating her relative and to do for curing souls already tainted by evil, what her cousin was doing to keep souls innocent. The young woman willingly took charge of the work. Another pious working-woman consented to help her. Both gave themselves to the budding work and Mesdames David and Foujols went to gather, from dens of vice, souls which they wanted to save. Thus was formed, in this rented house in Rue des Deux Amis, the first assembly of *Penitents*.

The clergy of Saint-Etienne, who knew better than anybody the need of such a work, favored it from the beginning and gave it great services. In Rue des Deux Amis, the young girls continued to come and go, either to their work or to assist at parish devotions. This distraction did not help in uplifting them. Finding themselves again face to face with the same temptations, these poor souls felt the same dangerous desires enkindled. Experience proved that young girls, who had had the misfortune of falling into disorderly lives, may profit by their living in a Refuge only on condition of their being absolutely separated from all their past associations. From that time, enclosure was imposed upon them. No such enclosure was possible in the rented house. Mesdames David and Foujols and the young directresses were disheartened at the little result obtained from their efforts.

In the face of difficulties, abuses resulted from the incomplete organization of the work; and Archbishop de Pins advised them to have recourse to the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The Refuge being a complement of the prisons, Mother Saint John in response to this request entrusted the direction of the work to Mother Saint Polycarp Duplex. Three Sisters especially trained for this kind of work went with her. Mother Saint Polycarp saw at once that the Refuge could not give any good result under the present conditions, and accepted its charge only on the condition that the directresses busy themselves immediately with finding a site suitable for their needs.

In Rue du Haut Tardy, now Rue Claude Delaroa, there was a very old house surrounded by an enclosed garden. This house whose foundations are still preserved to a great extent, was the summer residence of the Lords of Saint Priest before the Revolution. The last marquis of this line, being ruined financially, was forced to sell his domains. These, after having changed owners several times finally came into the possession of the city of Saint-Etienne before 1789. At the time of this narrative, they belonged to the families Gagnière and Bertholet, who consented to sell to the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Mother Saint Polycarp transferred the community there on April 27,

1838. This community consisted of four Sisters and ten *penitents*. The number of the latter was soon increased.

A little chapel, now classed as a monument of historic art, was annexed to this house. It is a remarkable type of the religious architecture of the early eighteenth century. This chapel, although rather small, sufficed in the beginning. On May 3, 1838, Mass was celebrated there for the first time by Father Froget, rector of the main church, who first blessed the sanctuary as a matter of precaution against any profanations committed by the Revolutionists.

On August 11, 1838, Archbishop de Pins appointed Father Fourboul chaplain for the convent. It was not possible for him to reside there. The *Pieux Secours* served as his residence until November 11, 1839. The Sisters had to consider now, the need of a large chapel as well as a chaplains' home. The necessity for this chapel did not permit them to wait, so they temporarily transformed a barn into a poor sanctuary. Father Froget blessed it and Father Séon Superior of the Marist Fathers of Valbenoîte opened a retreat on July 15, 1840.

Archbishop de Bonald, recently given charge of the Archdiocese of Lyons, made his first visit to the Refuge in September. He showed the interest he had in this work, and, until the end of his life this holy prelate did not cease bestowing on it his kindness. Every time he went to Saint-Etienne he never failed to visit the Refuge and, on many occasions, made it feel the effects of his generous charity.

That same year, on November 26, 1840, the Refuge was recognized as a public benefit by royal ordinance. Up to that time, the gifts of the charitable people of Saint-Etienne alone had supported the work. The principal families made it rich offerings in the beginning. Then this work was pronounced indispensable not only to provide the necessities of life, but also to employ penitents in useful labor and to help in their moral uplift. From that time all went well in the Refuge, where, in that favorable environment, the young girls were reformed. In 1845, some of them were permitted to occupy a small house within the enclosure but separated from the community. They gave it the rather pretentious title *Monastery of the Penitents.* Only those were admitted who, truly converted, wished to assure their perseverance by renouncing the world. In their *monastery* they lived peaceably, working with silk like the other women of Saint-Etienne. We have just seen that, in the name of liberty, their machinery and choice of work were destroyed. After the riot, only sewing was permitted at the Refuge as in the other convents. Sewing was suitable neither to all eyes nor to all temperaments and was scarcely lucrative.

The insane devastations committed in 1848 enriched neither the Refuge nor France. Sewing could not support such a house, nor help in its reconstruction. The Sisters were forced to ask an indemnity from the government, to have recourse to begging, to resign themselves to loans and to live in straightened circumstances. The Sisters began again in the Refuge as in other places. The by-laws of the work were changed according to the needs of the time. Today the penitents of Rue Claude Delaroa are replaced by the *Jeunes Aprenties.*

The fanatics went from the Refuge to Saint Mary's. The Providence of Saint Mary was the oldest benevolent establishment of Saint-Etienne. The Sisters took care of the children of the establishment in a building which belonged to the hospital. Nothing existed for the other needy children of the city, when M. Bréchignac, a lawyer of Saint-Etienne, filled with compassion for the poor stray little girls whom he met, had the generous inspiration of giving them a home. He and Madame Bréchignac rented three rooms in a house in Rue de la Charité, brought there some of the little orphans and confided them to the care of servants. The three rooms were not enough, as the number of children increased. M. Bréchignac interested other generous families in his little girls. M. Nicolas, a banker of Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, sold his house and land on the street which became Grande Rue de la Providence. The house was small, but the grounds were spacious enough for building. In 1812, M. Bréchignac had recourse to the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Mother Saint John placed Mother Saint Ambrose at the head of this little orphanage where a workshop was organized. The latter, aided by some Sisters and generous gifts, undertook the construction of the large building and the chapel of the Providence of Saint Mary. The heart of Mademoiselle Balaÿ, one of its worthy benefactresses, rests beneath this chapel.

CHAPTER XIX

DUSTY ARCHIVES

AT the gates of the city there is Saint-Genest-Lerpt, whither the Sisters of Saint Joseph were invited by the inhabitants in 1660. They remained in the same location until 1723, when, on September 29, of that year, their savings had permitted them to acquire a house and a garden. This community, approved by Archbishop de Neuville, was dispersed and robbed like the others. The property brought twelve thousand thirty francs to the government.

In 1809, the Sisters bought back the house and the garden, and reorganized the community. We do not know whether or not it was the same house and the same garden. We know only that the house and the garden were sold by Anthony Esparon to Colombe Fournier, Superior of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, and that three years later an imperial decree approved the community. In Saint-Genest-Lerpt there were two schools, one, a day-school which was free; the other, a boarding-school to which were admitted day pupils who could afford to pay. The laws of secularization closed both these schools.

Still, near Saint-Etienne, but on the other side of the city, at Saint-Genest-Malifaux, deeds, found in the archives, tell us that on April 13, 1719, the Sisters of Saint Joseph had a community of nine Sisters. Another deed tells us that it was the same on October 2, 1727. We find nothing about the sixty-two years between 1727 and 1789 nor of the terrible years which followed. From a document dated August 9, 1821, we learn that on January 10, 1818, they had to turn the water aside to irrigate Father Courbon's meadow and to "prevent the filterings, in conformity with a treaty of March 19, 1807." The community had eleven members in 1835: Anne Drevet was the Superior.

On March 29, 1840, the Bureau of Benevolence gave one thousand, two hundred francs to the Sisters to buy beds and linen necessary for a hospital that was being organized for the poor and the infirm at Saint-Genest-Malifaux, in a house given by Father Courbon. The Bureau added six hundred francs to be expended for food. Four Sisters were attached to the hospital. Later, they added a pharmacy, which permitted them, with the profits of the sale of remedies, to enlarge the hospital which had at least twenty-three beds. The pharmacy operated well, and the Sisters were at the service of the sick day and night. Besides the hospital, there were schools which were closed by the laws of secularization.

Above Saint Genest is Jonzieux which, before 1789, was a part of the Diocese of Le Puy. The Sisters of Saint Joseph must have been established there about 1660. We find in the archives of 1664 the acts of profession of Louise Didier, Anna Brun and Angélique Bayle. On August 29, 1675, Jean Deshorts, parish priest of Jonzieux, gave by will to Louise Didier, a Sister of the Congregation of Saint Joseph established in Jonzieux, the forests he had acquired from Jean Gaspard de Brouac, Lord of the Terrace, which the latter had sold to pay his debts.

The board of trustees of the church gave on August 29, 1686, in the presence of the royal notary and other witnesses, and of Claude Jullien, Doctor of Theology, priest of the parish, to Louise Didier and to the "Daughters of Saint Joseph established in Jonzieux" permission to have a bench in the church and to be buried there. These favors were granted in gratitude for "the care given to the church for a long time," for having contributed toward the expense of a floor and for other notable sums of money which they furnished for the adornment of the main altar. The Sisters continued and still continue to attend to the altar and the cloths, but there are no schools where they may teach the children. At Marhles, above Jonzieux, there is still another parish which belonged to the Diocese of Le Puy and which the Concordat attached to Lyons. A deed of sale tells us that the Sisters of Saint Joseph had a community in this Christian parish in 1767. Numerous religious vocations came from the schools of Mahrles, but today, one must go to the hospital to see the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

Again we find the name Courbon when investigating the origin of this hospital. To establish it, Marie Courbon gave herself and all she possessed. This virtuous Christian devoted her property and her life to the poor, the sick, the aged, the infirm, the orphans and deserted children. A hospital was indispensable in a town of almost three thousand souls, where there was a great number of needy persons. Mademoiselle Courbon founded the hospital and gave herself, but that was not enough. Every Monday, this valiant, generous Christian went begging for the weekly supply of bread for the needy. She ate of this bread after giving her all.

We found in the archives a note which attests, at the same time, the poverty of the hospital and the gratitude of the one who had established it. "The first four measures of wheat were given by Jacques Petit of Bas Mouche, for we had nothing to give our poor children."

Before the foundation of the hospital, the Sisters of Saint Joseph had a school for girls at Marhles. Mademoiselle Courbon, who could not carry on the work she had founded, asked the Sisters to come to her aid. In response to her request, the Superior sent two Sisters. After the death of the foundress, the Sisters alone were in charge of the hospital which lacks nothing today.

Marhles is the birthplace of Father Champagnat, whose cause of beatification is in progress today. After his ordination he was sent, a curate, to Valla-en-gier. This virtuous priest brought God to this parish, whose villages are scattered on the slopes and defiles of Mont Pilatus, and which, though so difficult to serve, has remained deeply Christian, as have also the three previously named.

At La Valla, the Sisters of Saint Joseph have, from a remote date, occupied themselves with the teaching of little girls. The little boys were really neglected. To give them Christian teachers, the virtuous Father Champagnat founded the Society of the Little Brothers of Mary which has spread over the entire world. La Valla is far from Marhles, and yet, these two parishes resemble each other in their attachment to the Faith and the fruitfulness of religious vocations. Two daughters of La Valla were among the *Black Daughters*. One of the two was the Superior of the group of Maison Pascal. The apostolate of Father Champagnat seems to have united these two places which Mother Saint John loved.

Whenever she tore herself away from her many occupations of the Chartreux to visit her dear daughters of Forez, Mother Saint John often remained in the convent of Ricamarie. This house was originally a sort of annex of Chambon. We produce the only deed of the time which has been found in the archives.

"The establishment of the Sisters of Saint Joseph at Ricamarie took place on July 2, 1810, the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin. Madame Louise Montagnier, Religious Hospitaler of the Hospital of Montluel, and a native of Saint-Etienne, saw that the young girls of Ricamarie, and especially the needy, had no means of Christian education. Inspired by Divine Providence, she conceived the pious design of establishing a community of the Sisters of Saint Joseph at Ricamarie for the Christian education of the needy girls of this parish.

"Her father, John Joseph Montagnier, willingly consented to participate in her worthy enterprise, and donated the sum of four hundred francs which was to be paid annually by the public treasury to the Sisters as long as this establishment existed.

"Conformably with the pious intentions of the benevolent foundress, Sister Clémence David and Sister Marie Joseph Pitaval, both of the community of Chambon, with the consent of the Superior General of the Congregation and of Father Jouve, parish priest of Ricamarie, as well as the authorization of Father Cholleton, Vicar General and of His Eminence, Cardinal Fesch, Archbishop of Lyons, the Superior of all the communities of the Diocese of Lyons, have commenced this establishment in the home of the Micolond heirs.

"Given and signed at Ricamarie, the day and year above.

"Sister Clémence David
"Sister Marie Joseph Pitaval
"Jouve, Parish Priest"

The community of Ricamarie soon grew in numbers. It had at first, its autonomy, its free school, its boarding-school and the care of the poor and the sick. It even had its little novitiate, its receptions and professions. Always united to the source which had given it birth, it hastened to Chambon when it needed subjects, and Chambon appealed to it in similar circumstances. It was placed under the authority of the Superior General of the Motherhouse of the Chartreux in 1819.

The origin of the community of Chambon brings us back to the middle of the sixteenth century. This remote date seems improbable; but when one delves into the reading of the old papers of the convent, one learns that there was formed in this parish in 1554, under the direction of the parish priest, a secular society of pious women. These thoroughly Christian souls, united in the design of helping the poor and sick and mutually aiding one another in the practice of virtue and charity. These pious women, like Saint Paul, model of the apostles of Christ, worked with their hands, sewing silk and weaving ribbons in order not to be a burden to anybody.

During one hundred years, this life of humility and devotion was practised in obscurity and in silence. These pious women, whose names have not even been kept, rendered their services quietly in the homes of the poor, who awaited them as angels from God to procure for them all the spiritual and temporal assistance their state demanded.

When Bishop de Maupas and Father Médaille founded the Sisters of Saint Joseph at Le Puy in 1650, the news spread like wildfire. Everybody was on the watch for this creation at once so daring and so seasonable. Religious outside the cloister had never been seen. These were seen, however, because there was such great need for them. The priests desired them as auxiliaries and soon in Velay, Forez and Vivarais there was a spontaneous opening of convents of this congregation.

Chambon was one of the first to have its convent. That is easily explained. The pious women whom the Holy Spirit had inspired with dislike for the world and a great desire of recollection, of solitude and silence were eager to embrace a more perfect state of life. As soon as they knew the possibility of it, they requested admission into the Congregation of Saint Joseph, patron of the interior life. The zealous priest, who directed them, joyfully consented to this desire and Dame Madeleine de Peloux, worthy spouse of the high and mighty Baron Gaspard de Caponni, built a house which she gave, together with an adjacent garden, to the community.

We find in the archives a deed which speaks of a gallery of the church and a covered passage supported by arches. This balcony began at the convent, crossed the square like a viaduct and ended in the church gallery, thus permitting the Sisters to attend religious services without going out. The noble Baron Caponni, Lord of Feugerolles, added this gift to that of his wife. Certain conditions were imposed by Baron Gaspard de Caponni in exchange for the gallery and the balcony that led to it. Every Sunday, the Sisters were to sing the litany of the Blessed Virgin in the chapel of Feugerolles, one of the chapels of the church of Chambon, and to have a candle of white wax burned on one of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin for M. and Madame Feugerolles.

It may be easily understood that these conditions can no longer be fulfilled in a public church on account of the new organization. The chapel, the gallery and the balcony disappeared at the time of the building of the present church, but the Sisters make up the deficiency by prayer. A notice posted on the linen room of the convent recalls the memory of the benefactions and the duty of gratitude. This is what may be read: "The Sisters are asked to pray for our benefactors, Baron de Caponni and his worthy wife, Dame Madeleine de Peloux."

This new foundation, which God seemed to bless, prospered under the patronage of its generous benefactors who rejoiced to see good being accomplished through their generosity. Madame du Roseil, descendant of the Feugerolles, had a room furnished in the convent. She came every Sunday to spend her day there and edified the Sisters by her virtue and simplicity.

Chambon was not then what it is today. There was space around the convent. People sought to live nearer to it as formerly in the case of abbeys, sure of finding, in this house of peace, protection, assistance and security. Homes were erected and young girls came to what they called the monastery asking to be admitted. Some belonged to distinguished families, such as Mademoiselle Bourdon, the Mesdemoiselles Perrinet and Mademoiselle de Chazeau. Their entrance acts form part of the archives of the community. The Mesdemoiselles Perrinet gave a gift of a domain upon condition that instruction be given poor children of both sexes. The community of Chambon, possesses numerous dusty papers. It was while searching through these old papers, which are almost illegible, that we obtained our present information. There are some which inform us that in 1660, the community numbered eleven Sisters of whom Jeanne Deville was Superior. The entrance acts, signed by the notary before her reception, acquaint us with their family names.

These old papers tell us also that, in 1660, Father Tallier bequeathed by will, to the community, a house and its furniture, situated opposite the church. We may say that the memory of the venerable priest and of several other donors is piously preserved in the community. In these old papers we found an ordinance of the Archbishop of Lyons, Alphonse de Richelieu, nephew of the great cardinal, who approved the community in 1661. There are royal ordinances among these documents. One dated April 9, 1736, requires that, in every religious house, the Sisters keep two registers, one for the receptions and the other for deaths. These registers exist. They have kept the names of the former Religious for us. That is rare good fortune, because, almost everywhere, the archives were the first things destroyed by the Revolutionists.

Before the Revolution, instruction for girls was quite neglected. Our old papers tell us that the Religious of Chambon taught their pupils reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic and catechism, a very liberal course of studies for those times. As witness of their satisfaction and affection, many persons gave valuable gifts. These gifts and the dowries brought by the candidates helped to build a chapel and permitted the Sisters to aid the needy more efficaciously.

The reading of Holy Scripture was one of the usual occupations of the Sisters. The number of volumes in ancient lettering proves it. Books of devotion are equally numerous. They are preserved as relics. The convent was a place of prayer, expiation, work and charity. The community still possesses the large kettles in which the Sisters cooked the soup for eighty poor persons whom they helped every day. These latter went to the convent in all their necessities, and were never disappointed. The Sisters of Saint Joseph were founded to glorify God in obscurity and silence and, without pomp or any false glory, to assist the neighbor. There is no house in the world where there was less noise than in Nazareth. There is none in which more good was accomplished; and it is on the ideal of Nazareth that the life of a Sister of Saint Joseph must be modelled.

When the storm of the Revolution burst upon Chambon, all that the convent possessed was confiscated and sold as government property. The community then numbered fifteen members. These were allowed to draw up a lease for three years and to remain in their house as tenants. At the expiration of the lease, three bailiffs notified them that they had to appear before the civil tribunal. This tribunal ordered them to leave the premises. They obtained permission for each one to occupy a different room and to live there separated from one another under the supervision of a commissary, in return for the use of the house. One finds in the archives, the judgment of the tribunal and several rent receipts signed by the citizens of the time.

The Sisters lived in misery as tenants in their own home. They had, as a supervisor, an iniquitous commissary who tortured them to make them work on Sundays and kept them in sight, never permitting them to say a word to one another. A sign agreed upon with the neighbors informed them of the passage of a priest. When each one separately obtained permission to leave the house, she had to go stealthily to the place where Mass was celebrated, since it was almost impossible to protect herself from the pitiless supervision.

There is little known about the convent during the time which followed the Terror. It is enough to learn that the Sisters prayed, worked, suffered and devoted themselves to others. Having nothing for their property but the modest life annuity given by the despoiling government, they were reduced to a state of extreme poverty. This income of one hundred thirty-two francs a year for the most aged, and one hundred eleven francs for the others,—an amount not sufficient for support when old age obliged her to stop all work,—died with the one to whom it had been granted.

After the Concordat, the Sisters tried in every way to recover their property. Not one of these means succeeded as the property had been sold. Later, they bought back, at first, one half of their convent; then the other half; finally the garden; then, in fragments, a part of their other goods, land and demesne. The house, the legacy of Father Tallier, had been sold as well as the rest. It was occupied by an irreligious tavern-keeper in 1807. The proximity of the tavern to the church was prejudicial, in the highest degree, to the august solemnity of religious ceremonies. The faithful, assembled in the holy place, were disturbed in their prayers by the cries, the songs and the dances of the frequenters of this den of iniquity.

Father Durié, parish priest of Chambon, wished to see this tavern disappear. "Mother," he said, "buy back your house in order to drive the devil from between the convent and the rectory. I will help you." The house was bought back. The original house, built by the Lord of Feugerolles, had to be torn down in 1872 as it had fallen into decay. Another house, suitable to the needs of the time, was built in the same place.

In conclusion, let us say a word about some of the Sisters. Sister Marguerite Reymondier was Superior when the storm of the Revolution broke. She had been appointed at a particularly difficult time, but she always proved herself worthy of her charge. As she had the care of the parish sacristy, as well as that of the convent, she found means of saving the sacred vessels from the Revolutionaries and of having the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass celebrated many times in the convent. The Sisters carefully preserve the furniture which served as an altar in those sad times and in which the sacred vessels were enclosed.

Mother Clémence David succeeded Mother Marguerite in 1814. This worthy Religious had shared all the sorrows of her Sisters during the Revolution. She was elected Superior in 1814 under Father Fronton. Mother Mary Francis Musset, who succeeded her, feeling the burden of superiorship, resigned her charge and was replaced by Sister Catherine Jourjon. It was during the superiorship of the latter that the community was united to the Motherhouse of Lyons.

CHAPTER XX

POVERTY IN A CASTLE

IT is said that Saint Robert, first abbot of Chaise Dieu, built the priories of Firminy, Chamble, Aurec, Val Fleuri and the church of the village which became Saint-Etienne between 1040 and 1050. The priory of Firminy, a dependency of the Abbey of Ile Barbe, belonged to the order of Saint Benedict. It was secularized in 1551 and united to the Seminary of Saint Irénée, in Lyons, before 1669. The Sisters of Saint Joseph of the community of Firminy paid a tax to the priors, who were then the directors of the seminary.

We do not know how the community of Firminy began. The oldest papers date from 1757 and are not those of the foundation. At that time the Sisters lived in a small house, Rue Saint Martin, with an adjoining garden. Vitale Peyrard was Superior. Two young girls, Marie and Jeanne Granger, living in the house as boarders or working-women asked to be admitted as Religious. This request was granted, and the father of these young women promised to pay part of their dowry when they entered the community and the other part at the time of profession. Father de Branges de Bourcia was the parish priest at that time.

Marguerite Alary was Superior in 1789. It was perhaps on account of their position that they were not disturbed before August 29, 1794. On that day without any preliminary warning, signs were posted on the walls informing the citizens that the Sisters' house was to be rented as national property. At once, Sister Alary protested in a letter which we reproduce:

"It is with the greatest surprise that while reading this morning a placard from the district, I learned that my house and garden are put up for rent. Both of them belong to me in my own right. I bought them with my own money. This I offer to prove. That is why, citizen administrators, I ask you to have the sign removed from my house, so-called of the Sisters, though it has never been under any monastic rule."

This assertion needs to be explained. We have said already that the Sisters of Saint Joseph took and still take the three vows of religion,—poverty, obedience and chastity,—but these vows are simple. The government did not recognize simple vows; for it, there were only the solemn vows, that is to say, the vows which destroyed the civil state of the Religious and disqualified her from inheriting, making a will or getting married. For society, the Religious who had taken solemn vows was dead, and only the convents inhabited by those with solemn vows were called monasteries. From the point of view of conscience, the vows of the Sisters of Saint Joseph oblige as truly as do solemn vows; in the point of view of the law, they were null, as the government did not recognize them. Sister Alary, whose civil identity was not destroyed, could say truthfully: "I have never been bound by monastic rule."

The civil authorities seemed at first to pay attention to this demand; the placards were removed, but, on September 28, 1795, Marguerite Alary was notified that her house would be sold the next day. We do not know what happened at this sale, but the Sisters remained in their house, probably as tenants of the government. They spent the dreadful days of the Terror there, working for their living. One of them actually became a peddler and thus found means of rendering invaluable services to the priests, to good Catholics and to the sick. The commissaries at Firminy must have been more humane than those of Chambon. The convent was a shelter for priests sought by the patriots. These priests were finally discovered.

One day, a detachment of soldiers arrived suddenly and demanded the priest hidden in the house. The Sister who was preparing the frugal meal for the community uncovered the pot in which the vegetables were cooking and said without being troubled: "Look, see if there are not some in here." At this joking answer, the men, shrugging their shoulders, went away without further search. The records do not tell us whether or not there were any priests there that day.

Dressed as seculars, the Sisters did as much good as they could. They taught catechism to the children, prepared them for their First Communion, procured the sacraments for the sick and baptism for the new-born. Marguerite Valla, who later became a Sister of Saint Joseph and who died at the age of eighty-six, was baptized during these dreadful days, in the Sisters' house.

The Superior, Sister Saint Joseph Alary, was admirable while the storm lasted. The Sisters, in their modest rôle, were no less so. These venerable old Sisters have affirmed that the observance of the Rule was never interrupted in the house. At their death, they left the most edifying memories. One of them, Sister Saint Louis, was gifted with childlike simplicity. On one occasion, the community was in great distress. The Sisters prayed much for their needs, but no help came. Sister Saint Louis went to the chapel, and approaching the altar, knocked on the tabernacle door: "Jesus, Jesus, do you not hear me?" Jesus showed that he heard. Assistance closely followed this act of confidence and faith.

A decree in 1804 permitted the wearing of the religious habit. The Sisters of Firminy were the first to resume it. At once postulants came, and again people saw receptions and professions in the parish church. The receptions were real feasts for Firminy. On that day, work was suspended and the inhabitants came dressed in their Sunday clothes. The priests carrying candles went to the convent for the postulants; and the young girls dressed in white were led to the church where the ceremony took place. Things continued thus until 1829, when the receptions and professions were held at the Mother-house of the Chartreux to which Firminy was annexed.

Activities developed in Firminy but the house had not been enlarged. The Sisters had to think of a new home. Sister Alary sold the original house, dear to all hearts, and bought a spacious one on the main street of Le Puy in 1811. On April 12, 1812, the community was approved by an imperial edict.

Mother Alary died in 1816. Sister Mary Teresa Dussauze, endowed, as the archives tells us, with all gifts of nature and of grace, succeeded her. They did not then see what a heavy burden they had just placed on these young shoulders.

The need of a hospital was felt at Firminy. The young Superior wanted to establish it, but money was lacking. M. Magnia, a rich merchant of Saint Chamond, knew the need of the hospital and the distress of the Superior. He contributed his share to this useful foundation and thus was its first benefactor. This help was not sufficient. Fortunately the Holy Spirit breathes where He will. It was to the heart of Pierre Fontvieille, a pious bachelor of Saint-Etienne, that He made Himself heard.

Pierre Fontvieille, obedient to Divine inspiration, went to Firminy and offered the Superior three thousand francs and his services. He became, then, both benefactor and nurse. Near the hospital, was an orphanage for poor little boys. With the aid of the Sisters, Pierre directed this new asylum of charity. He was filled with solicitude for these young children, and organized a workshop in the house for learning the trade of shoemaking for those who, having made their First Communion, wanted to embrace that trade. The children left only when they were able to take care of themselves. The life of this virtuous man was most austere. He slept on straw and ate what was left from the meals of the sick and orphans. He said his rosary every evening. "Should the house fall during his prayers, he would not turn his head," they said.

From year to year Firminy changed in appearance and importance. Factories were built, wells were dug and strangers flocked to the city. The number of pupils, which was always increasing, went beyond the accommodations in the house. The priory castle was on sale in 1831, and the friends of the community advised the Sisters to buy it. Sister Mary Teresa bought it by means of a loan. The owners had not taken the trouble to cut the stone to lay the foundation walls as the castle and its dependencies were built on an enormous block of granite. In the principal court, there was an immense cistern whose water was never exhausted.

The church of the priory, dedicated to Saint Peter, had been sufficient for the needs of the parish for several centuries. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, another church was opened with the title Notre Dame. The church of Saint Peter fell into ruins in 1670. The penitents who had settled there made necessary repairs and built a gallery.

When the community bought the castle it belonged to Madame Moully de la Tour de Varan, but the church belonged to the city. The Municipal Council refused to sell it, yet it authorized the Sisters to use the gallery. Mother Mary Teresa had an entrance door made in order to avail themselves of this permission. A municipal counsellor protested against the opening of this door. "We are not angels, we have no wings to fly to this gallery," Mother Mary Teresa said, "if you give us the use of it you must permit us the means of access to it." This controversy had no results but real trials were to begin. No repairs had been made since the castle had been built. These repairs were forced on the Sisters, but nobody could foresee what an enormous debt the community would incur. The Sisters had to borrow one hundred fifty thousand francs to pay these expenses.

This news caused great consternation in Lyons. Those were dark days. The spirit of faith of the twenty Sisters who formed the community, their energy and their devotion assisted by God's help, enabled them to avoid a disaster. Pierre Fontvieille was dead, therefore the orphanage for little boys had to be closed. The Sisters made arrangements with the creditors. Some silk merchants lent looms and furnished work. The tasks were begun resolutely and the debts were paid.

Everything changed. The looms that had rendered such great service were returned to the merchants, who had lent them, and the house was filled with children. From twenty, the staff reached thirty-five Sisters. Schools were opened in different sections. There were twenty-four classes and twelve hundred pupils both free and pay. Firminy became the noisy, commercial city, over which high chimneys poured their black smoke, while the underground work of the mines began its devastations. The block of granite did not resist. The cistern, whose fresh unexhausted supply of water was a treasure for the community, ran dry and the Sisters were forced to submit to the hardships of a land deprived of water. The walls cracked and the buildings were threatened with destruction. At last the property was abandoned on account of so many annoyances.

In times of trial, Mother Saint John loved to recall to the Sisters this maxim of Father Médaille, the holy founder of the Institute of Saint Joseph: "In your greatest troubles and dangers hope with great confidence, not that God will comfort you and deliver you but that at least He will do by you and in you, His most holy and amiable will, and live perfectly content with this expectation."

They were always secure in trusting God and relying on Him, Firminy was another proof. Father Merlaton offered himself as chaplain in 1833, when the community was in great distress. Overwhelmed with their trial, the Sisters could not promise him a suitable salary and were about to refuse this blessing from Divine Providence. This holy priest was not rich, but he did not offer himself for a salary. He remained in the house, never wishing to receive anything, and was always satisfied with the meager nourishment of the community to which he devoted soul and body.

Father Merlaton was born in Firminy in 1783. His father died shortly after his birth, leaving his mother with two children, a boy and a girl. At the age of six, the boy was placed with a farmer who employed him to look after the young cattle. The farmer, finding the little shepherd interesting, took him under his protection and taught him to read. At the end of three months he had mastered his task. Since he had a desire for study, he carried his book to the fields every day, and, while guarding his flock, learned his prayers and catechism.

We know nothing of the years which followed except that he supported his mother and sister by his labor and that he succeeded in saving enough money to permit him, at the age of twenty-one, to enter the little seminary of Verrières, where he became a model of every virtue. He thought for a time that he would be forced to abandon his studies as his savings were exhausted. Divine Providence came to his assistance. He became a priest. He was appointed curate, then parish priest of Maugia, in Bresse, which was at that time a part of the Diocese of Lyons. Father Merlaton was not far from the Curé of Ars, and these two saintly priests were bound by the ties of friendship. Later, when anybody went from Firminy to Ars, the great *thaumaturgus* used to say: "What brings you here? Have you not Father Merlaton in Firminy?"

After fourteen years of parish duties, Father Merlaton's health began to fail. It was then that he came to stay in Firminy. He soon had the confidence of the entire parish, in which he was called "holy father," and it was as the chaplain of the Sisters of Saint Joseph that he ended his life of silence, fervor and austerity. He died at the age of eighty-six.

About fifteen thousand people were present at the obsequies. His heart was placed in the chapel of Saint Peter, but his body was buried in the Sisters' vault. Many people who visited his tomb, claimed that they received special favors through his intercession. At the time of the expulsion of the Religious in 1880, Father Merlaton's body was transferred to the tomb of the parish priests.

CHAPTER XXI

FOR THE LORD'S ANOINTED

"IF they were ever to distill my uncle in an alembic," Napoleon once said, "the product would be seminaries." The Emperor might have added that in each of these seminaries, the Cardinal would wish to have Sisters of Saint Joseph. There was need for seminaries in the Diocese of Lyons as well as in the other dioceses of France. Priests were lacking everywhere. The guillotine had decapitated so many. To replace the martyred priests was the preoccupation of Cardinal Fesch when taking possession of his See. It was just for this special training for priests that he was anxious to open colleges. These colleges were to be little seminaries. Other prelates besides Cardinal Fesch had had this desire.

During the terrible years when there was danger everywhere, Father Mermet, a former director of the Seminary of Saint Irénée, who had returned from Switzerland, taught in the home of the Mesdemoiselles Rondot the three best pupils of his former classes of philosophy. He gave them a course in theology, then sent them to repeat the lesson to their fellow-students scattered in little groups in different places. Lyons had thus an itinerant seminary which gave twenty-four priests to the Church during those stormy days. This seminary numbered forty theologians in 1802.

In order to preserve the Faith in their city, the priests who had not been guillotined left their hidden retreats to prepare students for the course in theology. They assembled, in a barn or some retired place, young boys who felt an attraction for the priesthood. These priests, both missionaries and professors, began the priestly education of these boys during the revolutionary crisis. If a patrol or policeman were announced, each one took his books and fled to the neighboring woods. When the danger was over, they returned and resumed their studies.

It was thus that Father Gardette taught Latin at Saint-Romain-d'Urfé, Father Recorbet at Saint-Georges in Couzan and Father Feaux at Roche in the mountains which separated Forez from Auvergne. These admirable Confessors of the Faith made it a duty to work for the recruiting of the clergy as soon as the Concordat permitted them to return to their parishes. They rivalled one another in zeal and every pastor taught several boys in his rectory. "Although the teachers had received but a very poor professional training they had been subjected to another preparation; that of persecution and experience. The dangers of the Terror had admirably trained them to become educators and to form men." [1]

Such was the origin of our chantry schools. When the pupils became too numerous, the priest united several groups and had a little seminary. The Seminary of Saint-Jodard was founded by Father Devis in 1795. After the reëstablishment of religion, the Seminary of Montbrison was opened and, in six months, it was so filled that applicants had to be refused. In 1804, the Cardinal bought, with his own money, the Abbey of Argentière on the borders of the Rhone and the Loire. One day, in his pastoral visits, the Cardinal reached Alix, near Villefranche. This was another ancient noble chapter. Its solitude, its beautiful water and its pretty promenades charmed him. This seemed to him to be a most suitable place for a seminary. He bought the noble chapter of Alix.

Clerical schools were then at Saint-Jodard, Montbrison, Argentière, Alix and Meximieux, which then belonged to the Diocese of Lyons; and where Father Ruivet assembled the seminarians that he grouped first at Marboz in Ain. In 1807, the little seminaries conjointly numbered almost twelve hundred pupils.

Napoleon created the University and placed at its head as *Grand Master,* the Minister of Public Instruction in 1808. The University was the only *obligatory school* charged to give, in the name of the Emperor, primary, secondary and advanced instruction. A decree closed all seminaries in 1811. Seals were put on the buildings and seminarians were forced to follow the University courses. How history repeats itself.

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[1] *Vie du R. P. Mermier, fondateur des Missionaires de Saint-François de Sales d'Annecy et des Soeurs de la Croix,* par le P. Léon Buffet, Paris, Beauchesne.

In 1815, the seminaries were again peopled with devoted aspirants to the priesthood, and Mother Saint John had to find Sisters for these establishments. She gave Sisters whom she herself had trained with all her faith. From 1814 to 1824 she gave some to Verrières, Montbrison, Argentière, Alix and Meximieux. She gave Sisters for the infirmary, the clothes room, the kitchen, for the small classes in the seminary and, in several of these places, for the parish school. At the same time that she gave them to these localities, she gave some to many other dioceses and especially to Valfleury, the ancient and celebrated pilgrimage of the Virgin, who has never wished to leave her golden valley. She gave Sisters to Maclas and Bourg-Argental, two ancient priories built in deserted places. At Bourg-Argental, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, whose property had been confiscated during the tempest, bought the monastery of the Ursulines. The archives of the community perished in a fire. From an old paper snatched from the flames, we can decipher the following:

> "The Religious, vowed to teaching and the care of the sick, were professed in this community of Bourg-Argental in 1705."

This note teaches us that the Sisters of Saint Joseph were established in that city before that date. Another note found in the manuscripts of Father Seytre says:

> "There they found streets of which one no longer finds the name, as, Rue de la Réclusière, where the Sisters Hospitalers of Saint Joseph live today and where was built the Hôtel-Dieu and the chapel of Notre Dame de Pitié, belonging to the hospital."[2]

This permits us to suppose that before the Revolution the hospital was served by the Religious of Saint Joseph. Mother Saint John also gave Sisters to Burdigne, neighboring parish of Bourg-Argental. On September 20, 1820, they had a reception, and, on the twenty-fifth of the same month, a house for the Sisters was blessed. Let us continue to read:

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[2] Note communiquée par M. Émile Poncin de Bourg-Argental.

> "September 25, 1820, blessing of the house at Burdigne for a convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. This house was built by the munificence of René Pupil, ancient civil and criminal lieutenant-general at Bourg-Argental; and of Antonin Marie Béchetoille, proprietor and merchant living at Annonay. The blessing was given by Father Duret, canon and archpriest of the church of Annonay."

We cannot say whether or not Mother Saint John adopted Saint Julien-Molin-Molette at the same time. We have searched well and the Christian people of this section of Forez aided us in our researches. We did not find what we sought, but, on the contrary, we found something which deeply interested us:

> "When the inhabitants of Moulin-Moulette wished to have their church built, they had not the means to erect a belfry for the four bells which they had saved from the pillage and devastations of the Huguenots. They suspended two of these bells from four wooden stakes in the cemetery and left the other two on the pavement of the church, thus leaving them open to destruction. Marguerite de Gaste, Dame de Saint-Julien, Lupé, Montrond and other cities, prevented this accident. She gave to the parishioners of Saint-Julien the upper floor and the one nearest the roof of a square tower joining the church to serve as a belfry. The donor reserved the rest of the tower for herself and was to regain possession of the given floor, if thereafter the parish had a belfry."

As we were still searching, we found that in 1777, Saint Julien had Religious of the Congregation of Mary. Do they mean Saint Mary? In that case it would be the Religious of the Visitation. These were replaced by the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1793. André Pourret, curate at Colombier, an annex of Saint Julien, took the constitutional oath and was installed in the rectory of Saint Julien on July 19, 1791, in the place of Father Antoine Léorat, who refused to take the oath and, in consequence, had to leave the parish. The property of the

Sisters of Saint Joseph of Colombier was confiscated and sold.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph were in the parish before the Revolution. They saw, and God knows with what sadness, the schismatic priest take the place of the lawful priest. On the day of his installation, the bells were no longer in the square tower as the church had its belfry. In order to build it, the faithful had imposed, for a period of two years, a double tax on the grains,—wheat, rye and oats.

Up to that time, the four brass voices, placed in the tower, had sung only for God. On the day of the sacrilegious ceremony of his installation, they sang for the apostate, but soon became silent. Those who invited the false priest asked him to leave the next year. The church was transformed into a workshop; and the bells of Saint Julien came down again, were broken and sent to help in the making of cannons.

The convent of Saint Joseph resumed its works when order was reëstablished. The Sisters opened a school and were in charge of the Bureau of Benevolence for the assistance of the needy of the town. M. and Madame Pré, who had no children, gave their house and all its furnishings for the establishment of a hospital. They asked the Sisters of Saint Joseph to serve it. The motherhouse gave three Sisters and Mademoiselle Coin took charge of the food for the hospital.

The three Sisters gave themselves whole-heartedly to the work assigned to them. To obtain resources for the hospital and to indulge their patients a little, they became seamstresses, dealers in herbs, grocers and pastry cooks. They opened a little pharmacy where they prepared all the remedies. They even found time to make the altar breads for the neighboring parishes. Their labor, economy and management soon placed them in a position to provide for themselves and to support the hospital, which still operated in Maison Pré.

The school and the Bureau of Benevolence submitted to the common fate, as they fell under the laws of secularization. The original hospital has been replaced by a more modern one. The fine pharmacy annexed to it has assumed importance. On certain days, a doctor and a dentist have consultations and the people from the nearby towns bring their prescriptions to the Sister pharmacist and take back the remedies which are to cure the sick.

Let us end with Saint-Pierre-de-Boeuf. The Sisters of Saint Joseph have had a community there for a long time. The will of Anne Béraud, who died as Superior in 1828, informs us that this community existed in 1798 and that she was not the first Superior. Mother Mary Teresa had governed before her. The convent was then in Rue Centrale and was transferred later to the present house, which was sold to the Sisters by the Mesdemoiselles Marat, sisters of the conventionalist, stabbed in his bath by Charlotte Corday, grandniece of the Great Corneille. After the tragic death of their brother, the Mesdemoiselles Marat, in order to repair as far as possible the evil he had done, devoted themselves to good works, particularly the Christian education of children whom they assembled in their home. The Sisters succeeded them in the house and school, when old age no longer permitted them this occupation.

Sister Saint Bruno Lafleur succeeded Sister Béraud in 1828. She had great difficulties during her administration. At the time of her assuming charge, M. Collard, mayor of the city, builder and proprietor of the castle situated at Le Port on the banks of the Rhone, felt the need of an orphanage. He made an agreement with the Superior to erect on the Sisters' land, beside Maison Marat, a building where the young orphan girls could be received and educated and he promised his coöperation. The mayor failed to keep his promise and the community had to bear all the expenses.

Mother Saint Bruno received some orphans. She organized a workshop for weaving silk in order to support the work and to pay for the house. The young girls of the parish were happy to find an occupation near their homes. It was thus that the silk industry was introduced into the city by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Good had come out of evil.

In the archives of the community, are certain deeds where there is question *of the land of the Lady*. This land, was a part of Sister Béraud's patrimony. Puzzled by this name *land* *of the Lady,* we have learned that this Lady is none other than the Virgin of Anis or the Virgin of Le Puy. The city of Le Puy had the name Anis until the seventh or eighth century.

The church of Le Puy, the ornament and glory of Velay, was the oldest, the most celebrated and the most venerated sanctuary in all France during the Middle Ages. "Numerous were the pilgrims who, coming from Roussillon, crossed the Rhone at Port-de-Boeuf and found a deep road which separated from the royal highway and followed a wide bend in the road which went towards Saint Sauveur and Velay. This road is no longer used, but it still bears the name *Chemin de la Dame du Puy.*"[3] (Road of the Lady of Le Puy.) The Sisters of Saint Joseph are happy to possess this road, which our ancestors crossed while telling their beads. Mother Saint John, opened her heart and her Institute to all the religious families we have just seen. By means of her personality, she brought together these families, isolated until then, separated by rivers, plains, mountains, and above all by the old habits of independence.

Doubtless, all were doing good work. Each one was doing it in a more or less defective manner. There are at times great material difficulties to conquer in a foundation. One must struggle against old customs for old habits have ordinarily a tenacity to defend them. Will one ever know what it cost Mother Saint John to bring such an enterprise to a good end? What tact she needed not to wound anybody? What patience, what humility and what prudence to conquer and overcome these obstacles and prejudices this tact demanded. And yet this great work was done calmly and peacefully.

Canon Rivaux relates that a certain community still longed to be independent, from a fear of the control which centralization would exercise over its superfluities. Mother Saint John was unknown to this community. She went there as a Sister from Lyons who was traveling and wished hospitality. She positively forbade her companion to say who she was. All passed under this *incognito* in a most religious, charitable manner. Mother Saint John charmed the entire community by her kindness, her amiability, her exquisite tact and her deeply religious spirit. She so gained their esteem and confidence, that they requested her to obtain some consideration or favor in the present situation. This she promised in all simplicity, frankly and heartily.

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[3] Monlezun: *L'église angélique.*

"The impression of esteem, respect and veneration which she produced, reached such a point that at the moment of separation and departure, a Religious of the community could not help exclaiming: 'I think that she who is leaving us is Reverend Mother Saint John.' The Sister companion, having smiled at this unexpected exclamation, the community recognized the treasure it possessed without knowing it. Instead of leaving, the good Mother was obliged to remain, urged by the Superior and her daughters, who begged her to spend some days with them. Mother Saint John consented and succeeded in winning all hearts. The community was happy to join the Motherhouse of Lyons and to obey such a Mother.

"It was thus that her kindness and wisdom captivated all hearts. Her visits to certain convents did an immense good. She brought charity, confidence and peace everywhere. The isolated communities grouped with love around the motherhouse and the Congregation of Saint Joseph has always been distinguished by its affectionate and filial veneration for its Reverend Mother." [4]

One of Mother Saint John's most powerful arms of conquest was her simplicity. Too humble to be diplomatic, the virtuous Mother was simple and sincere. Without evasion, studied elegance, affectation or any desire to produce an effect, Mother Saint John said what she had to say. Her words revealed her thought and her deeds confirmed her words. The communities which she visited saw this quickly. This simplicity and integrity put people at their ease and inspired confidence.

Mother Saint John was simple but not crude. She was not naïve; ah no! All in her was great, and to everybody and everywhere, her dignity commanded respect and her virtue inspired veneration. She was simple, but she had eyes to see and ears to hear. No one deceived her, but one was sure of meeting with her kindness much more than with her justice, whenever she needed it. Under her simplicity and customary good nature, one felt, nevertheless, the heart which loves, the spirit which enlightens, the wisdom which directs, the solicitude which watches, the prudence which rules, the firmness which corrects, the authority which protects and the holiness which communicates itself. Hence, this veneration and this confidence which were constant and universal. Near her, hearts were encouraged because they felt themselves loved. The good Mother did not abandon those of her children whom she dispersed to the cities or to the mountains. Like Saint Paul she would have been able to say: "Dearly beloved daughters, my heart opens to you, dilates and stretches. Come to it; you will not be poor." Mother Saint John's daughters felt the heart of their Mother, and their hearts responded to hers.

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[4] M. Rivaux.

Canon Rivaux tells us that under this maternal direction, not only did the particular communities consent to unity, but soon like the ancient Citeaux which, spreading its spiritual riches into neighboring deserts, formed angelic colonies which they call *Daughters of Citeaux,* the family of Saint Joseph also sent out colonies with daughters worthy of their Mother. These colonies no longer depend on the Motherhouse of Lyons, but the separation was made without disagreement with the consent and under the direction of the Archbishops of Bordeaux, Alby and Chambéry and the Bishops of Gap and America. The colonies of Corsica, Touraine, Vendée, Provence and other cities have remained under the authority and direction of the Superior General of Lyons.

The works of charity conducted by the Congregation of Saint Joseph were indeed "so consoling that after the pastoral visitation of his diocese, Archbishop de Pins hastened to the motherhouse to congratulate and thank Mother Saint John. The humble Mother gave all the glory to God, and blessed Him from the bottom of her heart for deigning to use her daughters for the glory of the Church, and the salvation of souls."

The Sisters of Saint Joseph were everywhere. In the Department of the Loire alone, Mother Saint John had the consolation of founding "one hundred fifteen convents of her congregation. This good seed did not fall on barren soil. Ancient Forez, now the Department of the Loire, was like the nursery of the novitiate." The Sisters edified the people while helping them, and a number of young women resolved to follow in their footsteps, to live their life, to practise their Rule and to consecrate themselves in the family where they had received such a holy education. Thus was increased the devoted army which the charitable Mother directed; and everywhere the people received, as angels of God, those Religious who came to dress the wounds of the poor, to wipe away tears, to console the sorrowful and to serve as mothers to the orphans.

CHAPTER XXII

A VALIANT WOMAN

WE read in the notes of the Council of the motherhouse, dated October 26, 1840:

"A Superior and Sisters have been asked for Belley. The Council decides that Sister Saint Joseph Chanay will be sent as Superior and with her two novices, Sister Saint Thomas Dessaignes and Sister Bathilde Bardot. They will leave on the twenty-eighth of the current month."

Sister Saint Joseph Chanay is not unknown; the reader remembers the young postulant of Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux whose special favors from Heaven astonished everybody. Father Bochard did not fail to observe, in each of his visits, "the little Sister" and his observations led him to place great hopes in her. Formerly parish priest of Bourg, in the Department of Ain, he had resolved to send there this ardent, generous soul and in his haste to see his plan succeed, advised shortening her novitiate. The day after her reception, on January 3, 1815, she arrived at Chazay-sur-Ain. She returned there as Superior in 1820.

The Convention had left deep traces of impiety in Chazay, and physical suffering was almost as great as moral misery. The Sisters of Saint Joseph, established in this city in 1814, gratefully received the aid that Heaven sent them and the "little Sister," in spite of her frail, delicate constitution, began the work courageously. Her ardent and radiant virtue soon attracted souls. The catechism lessons offered her occasions for speaking of God. To the catechism for children she added one for the adults and she inspired so much interest and unction, that, every week, three hundred people from Chazay and the neighboring parishes came to listen to her.

Father Bochard's relatives lived in Belley and he wished to have Sisters of Saint Joseph in this city, although nobody had asked for them, because there were Sisters of a different Institute already there. Mother Saint John tried to make him abandon the idea of this foundation, for she had a horror of anything that showed the least appearance of rivalry. Father Bochard, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Congregation, was firm in maintaining his wish, and obtained, from the council, the Sisters and the Superior chosen by him. The latter was only twenty-four years old.

Father Bochard commanded Sister Saint Joseph to come to Lyons as soon as the council of the motherhouse had ratified his decision. He informed her that she was to establish a community in Belley. She went to Chazay with the Sisters appointed by the Council. The young Superior visited the parish priest, Father Guillomot, as soon as it was convenient after her arrival. He asked her what she had come to do there, since he had not asked for her. Mother Saint Joseph answered modestly that she came through obedience and that she hoped to find him a father who would assist her by his advice.

"You speak very well," he said to her, "but I must inform you that I do not look upon your arrival with pleasure. The authorities should at least have consulted me. I tell you sincerely you have everybody against you; you will find no resources in the city. Do not count on any children for your school. We have all we need to teach the young. I urge you to return to Lyons."

Mother Saint Joseph would have returned to Lyons willingly, but she was to remain. In spite of this frigid welcome which she expected, she answered sweetly, feeling in her heart that God would arrange everything. In a long letter to Mother Saint John, she gave an account of this first painful interview. The good Mother was not surprised, but her tender heart felt all that had tried her dear daughter. She opened her whole soul to the God of the Tabernacle about the need of the work she was beginning, apparently, under such unfavorable circumstances.

Heaven blessed the work and those who undertook it. Soon

Father Guillomot was a faithful friend, a true father and a devoted protector to the Sisters of Saint Joseph. During the ten remaining years of his life, he never ceased thanking God for the gift He had given him in spite of himself. He gave them a small house near the rectory. They formed classes which later numbered more than one hundred pupils.

The Revolution had left ruins and misery everywhere. Belley was very poor. A work of mercy was established under the direction of the Religious, and in imitation of the Lyonnais Charlottes, some ladies of the city begged money, bread, linen and clothing. These things were distributed to the needy.

The opposition of the beginning had disappeared like snow under the sun. In a few months, gratitude, attachment and affection had replaced it. The shining charity of the Sisters drew all hearts to them; and their cheerful, joyous virtue brought many postulants. The repairs and building were progressing in Lyons, but the motherhouse was not finished. The novitiate, still in the cloisters of the ancient Chartreux, was not large enough to receive the new candidates. Mother Saint John opened a novitiate in Belley. The convent was too small, so they had to find another house.

The chapter house was quite near. It was large, surrounded by a garden and adapted to suit all needs, were it not for its dilapidated condition. The framework would have to be changed entirely and the buildings needed costly repairs. At that time the community possessed thirty francs as its sole fortune. Mother Saint Joseph was convinced that, as the house was necessary for the accomplishment of good, Divine Providence would give her wherewith to pay. She offered a suitable price and the transaction was settled. She was told that, since the buildings belonged to minors, payment could be deferred until they attained their majority.

At some distance from Belley, she discovered an estate that would furnish wood for the framework. Again she prayed; and still without money she bought the wood, promising to pay as soon as it was delivered. The proprietor cut down the trees, transported them and came for the money; but the worthy

Superior had to ask him to grant her a delay of eight days. She begged God to inspire some generous people to come to her aid. Days passed and no money came, and her prayers became more urgent.

The time for payment again arrived but the money had not come. The virtuous Mother went to the chapel, took the book of the Gospels and read aloud a passage from Saint John: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will grant it to you." As she had not received any answer, she approached the altar, knocked on the tabernacle door and said: "Lord, You do not answer and yet You need three thousand francs without delay."

Frightened at her audacity, she went to her room. She saw a handkerchief, knotted in the four corners, on the floor. She picked it up and untied it. It was filled with six franc pieces. She counted the money which amounted to three thousand francs. The Sisters thanked God. The wood was paid for and the house was repaired. The novitiate was opened as soon as the Sisters were installed. Soon they thought of receiving orphans and old people.

Whatever misery there was in Belley, it was due to its inhabitants. The people had as much horror for work as Mother Saint Joseph had for laziness. The sight of men full of vigor, of strong women and of children going about begging, was insupportable to the valiant Sister. She promised, with God's help, to draw this parasitic people from its abjection by inspiring them with the taste for work and its dignity. With this object in mind, she tried to introduce different industries into the city. She thought, at first, to have hats made from Italian straw. When she had had to combat the same vice at Chazay, she had sent for straw. She sent for some in Belley. The work succeeded in Chazay; in Belley, because of apathy, it failed. She then thought of having rings and collars made of hair and beads. This industry had scarcely more success than the hats. She was obliged to abandon it. She tried sewing, but the profits were too meager to encourage it.

The inspiration then came to her to introduce the raising of silkworms. She scoured the country to find the needed mulberry trees, and sent for the eggs of silkworms. She asked the farmers to help her, giving them the work for the day and reserving the night work for herself, in order not to discourage them. She excited their interest by paying them good wages. The labor entailed was not great, and the profit was fairly good. Soon the people came from all parts of the city to learn how to breed silkworms. They planted a large number of mulberry trees and in a few years the city was endowed with an industry that gave work and comfort to a great number of families which had been living in idleness and misery. Mother Saint Joseph had a tender affection for her silkworms that she called "instruments of Divine Providence."

On February 23, Father Devie, Vicar General of Valence, was promoted to the Bishopric of Belley, suffragan of the Archdiocese of Bensançon, just reëstablished by Rome. Bishop Devie, who was consecrated on June 19, was installed on July 23 and the Department of Ain, separated from the too vast Diocese of Lyons, passed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Belley.

Bishop Devie, one of the greatest bishops of the nineteenth century, interested himself in the Sisters of Saint Joseph, who had about twenty convents and a novitiate in his diocese. Understanding all the good that could be operated through it, the eminent prelate manifested to the Superior General and the Archbishop of Lyons his desire to have his own motherhouse, to which would be united all the convents established by Mother Saint John in the Department of Ain. This wish could not be disregarded. Mother Saint John relinquished her convents, but not without sorrow. She recalled Mother Saint Joseph whom Bishop Devie wanted to keep, saying she was necessary for his plans. The virtuous Mother obeyed and set out for Lyons. At some distance from Belley, an accident to the carriage forced her to retrace her steps. This accident seemed providential. At once, Bishop Devie negotiated with Lyons and obtained permission to keep Mother Saint Joseph who was the first Superior General of the Congregation of Saint Joseph in the Diocese of Belley.

The next year Bishop Devie transferred the novitiate and the motherhouse to Bourg-en-Bresse, where the Sisters of Saint Joseph had been since 1812. That year, Bourg had opened at Brou, in the buildings of the ancient monastery of the Augustinians, an asylum for the insane and incurable. To direct these delicate and difficult works, the authorities had desired Sisters; therefore they applied to Mother Saint John. She gave Sisters and appointed Sister Saint Benedict as Superior.

Mother Saint Benedict performed her task with so much devotion and tact, that, when it was decided that the motherhouse would be at Bourg and that there was question of giving it a Superior General, she was elected with Mother Saint Joseph as assistant. The latter did not resign the superiorship of Belley where she continued to reside, and from which place she went to Bourg for the meetings of the council and for retreats. Every year she visited the convents under her care.

We have just witnessed the beginnings of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Bourg. If, as we hope, Mother Saint Joseph is one day raised to the altar, Lyons, Belley, Bourg, Gap and Bordeaux will have the right to say: "She is ours." Mother Saint Joseph remained Superior of Belley, but only for a time, however, as she was going to leave that city for a new foundation.

One of the principal cares of Bishop Devie was to preserve his flock from the attacks of Protestantism that the neighborhood of Geneva made particularly dangerous. In November, 1827, he made his first pastoral visit to Ferney, where the Calvinistic propaganda had concentrated its efforts. This little city, opposite Geneva, was, under the Restoration, the meeting-place of the freethinkers of Europe who came there, as if on pilgrimage, to be strengthened in the cult of Voltaire, a native of this city. The Protestants, although not numerous, possessed the greatest part of the land, and had obtained permission of the government to build a temple to which they endeavored to attract Catholics. The latter had no school and their little parish church, situated in the former stronghold of Voltaire, could hardly contain one fourth of the faithful. Alarmed at such a critical situation, the pious Bishop was resolved to build a large church in Ferney and to establish schools.

The church was built with the aid of a gift of five thousand francs, sent by Pope Leo XII, and the alms from the Catholics of all nations. A special brief from His Holiness had encouraged these pious liberalities. The church was opened for religious services in November, 1826; but there was, as yet, no school. Bishop Devie knowing the ardor, the devotion and the spirit of sacrifice of the Superior of Belley sent her to establish a house of her congregation in the city of Voltaire. Two Sisters accompanied her on this mission.

The Protestants did not look favorably upon the arrival of the Sisters. Their exasperation reached its height when they saw the ascendancy that the Superior of the new community was gaining over the Catholics and even over some of the Protestants. More than once they went to the convent, threatening to set fire to it and arming themselves with guns to frighten the Sisters, particularly the Superior whose influence they feared. Fear never entered her mind; she repeated her favorite sentence: "I fear only God; and yet I love Him more than I fear Him."

The Bishop had made her read several controversial works before her departure from Belley. This reading was very useful to her at Ferney, where the Protestants liked to quote and discuss texts from Holy Scripture. Her conversations with the adults enlightened the consciences of Catholics or broke down the prejudices of the Protestants. The most learned among the latter were troubled, and resolved to deter Mother Saint Joseph's progress by convincing her of the falsity of the Catholic doctrines.

They assembled some clever ministers and sent for the Mother, under pretext that a Protestant at the point of death wished to make a solemn renunciation. She arrived accompanied by another Sister. As soon as she had entered, she understood the snare laid for her. She showed no confusion and expressed her satisfaction at finding so many men thoroughly alive instead of one in the agony of death. They began to laugh, and one of the ministers asked her what she had come to do in Ferney. She answered that Religious act through obedience; but that, if her coming made some of them see the truth, she would esteem herself happy. They began the discussion. The Superior gave text for text and embarrassed them by the quickness of her retorts and the clearness of her reasonings In a short time the house of Ferney was established on a solid basis.

The active Superior's health suddenly broke; almost continual hemorrhages frightened her friends, and the doctors from Geneva declared her death imminent. She alone remained calm, continuing to wish for nothing but the accomplishment of the Divine Will. God did not wish to call her yet. She was brought back to Belley at the cost of much suffering. The eve of the feast of Saint Athelme, patron of the city and Diocese of Belley, she begged her doctor, M. Martel, to permit her to hear midnight Mass in the chapel dedicated to the saint, assuring him that she would be cured. "Yes," the doctor replied, "cured of all ills. You will be dead before arriving."

The Sisters asked Bishop Devie's advice. The virtuous prelate who knew the faith and confidence of the patient answered: "Do as she asks you." He, too, went to the shrine of the saint. At midnight, he saw the patient arrive carried by the Religious. The Holy Sacrifice began almost immediately. At the elevation of the Mass, the patient prostrated herself to adore; at Communion, she rose and went to the foot of the altar and knelt, without any support, while spending half an hour in prayers of thanksgiving. The Sisters were transported with joy and gratitude. Their beloved Superior arose, and, without any assistance, walked to the refectory and took her breakfast. Her cheerfulness, her voice and her strength came back at the same time. This prodigy caused great comment, and was published for the glory of the saint.

When reading the records of the first receptions and professions made in Lyons in the church of Saint Bruno or in the chapter room of the Chartreux, one finds the signature of several prominent priests. One of the names which recurs often is that of Father de la Croix d' Azolette. He was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese of Belley by Bishop Devie. In 1837, he was appointed Bishop of Gap. His first desire was to have a community of the Congregation of Saint Joseph in his diocese; that is to say, its own motherhouse, to which he could have recourse in all the needs of his church in Gap. It was from this point of view that Bishop de la Croix considered it, as did all bishops. The Motherhouse of Lyons, having to satisfy a number of requests, risked not answering quickly enough the appeal for help which came to it from the far away mountains. It would be convenient to have its staff at hand. That was why Bishop de la Croix asked the Bishop of Belley, whose ideas were similar to his, to give him Mother Saint Joseph and two other Sisters to establish a novitiate at Gap.

Bishop Devie was not willing to deprive his own diocese of the services of the Superior of his community and the assistant of her congregation. Yet, desirous of facilitating good for him who had been his devoted co-laborer, he consented to lend her for five years, after which she was to return to Belley. A Superior was appointed temporarily until her return.

Gap formerly had Sisters of Saint Joseph who had come from Vienne at the request of Bishop Marion. The bishop and consuls (magistrates) gave them the direction of Saint Claire Hospital in 1671, and later the "House of Charity" for orphans. At first, the Revolution left them in peace, but in 1797, the Civil Tribunal and the Criminal Tribunal installed themselves in the House of Charity from which the orphans were dispersed. The Sisters disappeared one after the other, and it was only in 1837 that they returned.

Mother Saint Joseph left Belley on December 18, 1837. She remained some days at Lyons where Sister Saint Wilfred and Sister Saint Mary came to join her. The three foundresses lived with the Ladies of the Sacred Heart for six days after their arrival in Gap, on Saturday, December 29, 1837, while they were waiting to take possession of the large house bought for them. This house was to be occupied for two months more by eight tenants. They were installed on January 4, 1838, on its top floor, which was vacant.

Their first care was to choose the best room at their disposal and to transform it into a chapel. On January 12, 1838, the Bishop said Mass in this chapel and left the Blessed Sacrament there. The pious Superior felt that, near her Divine Master, nothing could fail her any more. She used to say with childlike joy: "Lord, you must be satisfied with us. You are badly lodged, but still better than your spouses; for we have given you the best room in our attic."

The beginnings of the foundation were difficult. Bishop de la Croix, burdened with the expenses entailed by the needs of a poor diocese, could not do all that his heart inspired. The Sisters had no furniture. They slept on the mattresses which the seminary lent, and which they stretched on the floor each night. The trunks served as chairs. Three days after the installation of the Sisters, seven young women applied for admittance. They had to wait until the departure of the tenants. The Sisters opened the novitiate and organized classes in March. In September, the house had thirty postulants, a boarding-school and a large day-school.

It was Mother Saint Joseph's faith which, contrary to all human prudence, permitted her to admit to the novitiate young Alexandrine Guttin on November 5, 1838. Louise Guttin had desired, for a long time, to consecrate herself to God. She was the eldest of four orphan girls of whom the youngest, Alexandrine, had been sick for several years. Louise could not think of leaving her sister. Mother Saint Joseph said to her: "Bring me this child. God will arrange everything."

In vacation Louise went to her family which lived in the Department of l'Isère and brought her Sister Alexandrine back with her. The fatigue of a night spent in a carriage and the almost continual vomiting reduced the young girl to a very weak condition, but the affectionate welcome she received made her feel better. The good Mother put her in her room and lavished the most tender care on her day and night.

Mother Saint Joseph said to the patient, at the approach of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, "If God wants you, my child, He will know how to accomplish His designs. We are going to begin a novena. Promise Him, if He deigns to cure you through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to be a Sister with the name Mary of the Immaculate Conception." On December 8, she had enough health and strength to follow the community exercises and to begin her postulancy with her sister, Louise. The Sisters saw with sorrow the entrance of a subject who seemed to be only a burden. On May 19, 1839, the two sisters received the holy habit, the elder, known as Sister Saint Marie de Chantal was later the third Superior General of the Congregation of Gap. Alexandrine, who was generally called Sister of the Conception became the second Superior General of the Congregation of Bordeaux.

Besides the novitiate and schools, Mother Saint Joseph had established a hospital in Gap and convents in Serres, Embrun, Saint-Bonnet, Aleriès and Veynes. The climate of Hautes Alpes had severely tried her constitution. Condradictions and troubles of all kinds had so cruelly afflicted her, that in every way she seemed worn out and at the end of the works of her life. She had worked and suffered much. She was to work and suffer still more, no longer in Gap, but in Bordeaux. The Diocese of Bordeaux, the most extensive diocese of France, is one of the most important. The Concordat, having suppressed the ancient Diocese of Vienne, Archbishop d'Aviau had first occupied its See after the Revolution. Archbishop Cheverus,[1] also a Confessor of the Faith, succeeded Archbishop d'Aviau and in succession to these two illustrious prelates, Archbishop Donnet had been promoted to this See in 1837.

There was much to be done in this church of Bordeaux when Archbishop Donnet arrived. In spite of the devotedness of his illustrious predecessors, one priest alone had to serve, very often, as many as four parishes. This priest was not always a native of the diocese. It was often necessary to make an appeal to other dioceses, and these priests came from Corsica, Spain, Ireland and other countries.

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[1] Archbishop Cheverus, the first Bishop of Boston, had returned from America to assume direction of the Diocese of Bordeaux.

This explains the letter written on September 30, 1838, by Father Lyonnet, Superior of the little seminary of Saint John in Lyons, later Archbishop of Alby, to Archbishop Donnet. Father Lyonnet announced to the prelate the departure for Bordeaux of one of his professors, Father Montcenis. The priests went to Bordeaux, at that time, as they go today to a missionary country. Father Montcenis was Mother Saint Joseph's nephew, and Archbishop Donnet was formerly parish priest of Villefranche-sur-Saône, the virtuous Mother's birthplace. Father Montcenis had been two months at Bordeaux, when one day the Archbishop told him to write to his aunt, asking her to come to Bordeaux where a house and suitable furniture would be placed at her disposal.

This letter caused Mother Saint Joseph great surprise but she had, nevertheless, the impression that God thus manifested to her one of His wishes. As Bishop Devie was not at Belley, Mother Saint Joseph sent the letter to the Vicar General, Father Dépéry. Father Dépéry, after examination and reflection, also thought this a manifestation of Divine Providence and wrote to Archbishop Donnet, offering to discuss with him the question concerning Mother Saint Joseph. The Archbishop of Bordeaux answered:

> "You are a thousand times too kind. Our poor diocese is in such a state of abandonment that you can form no idea of it. Outside the cities of Bordeaux, Libourne and Réole, people have never seen a religious habit. The young girls, attending schools maintained by teachers, are careless and undisciplined. After the three missionary houses I have formed, I desire nothing so much as a motherhouse of Sisters for our little cities and towns. Let the good Sister Saint Joseph whom we have known a long time come to us as soon as she can, bringing with her three or four Sisters,"

At reading this letter, Mother Saint Joseph felt herself inflamed with zeal. Quite resolved to put her last strength at the service of this disinherited diocese, she wrote to the Archbishop of

Bordeaux on November 12: "I see God's hand in your project, and behold me ready." It was at this time, when she felt herself overwhelmed with sadness, when everybody, herself included, considered her as a worn out instrument, that Divine Providence called her to undertake the crowning work of her life. This most important work began like all the others in humility, in a poverty capable of frightening those who are only human. In Bordeaux, as in other cities, the trunks served as chairs, tables, almost beds. In Bordeaux, too, events happened of so trying a nature that even Bishop Devie, the austere director, said on learning it: "Her course through life has been one continued miracle."

She departed for Bordeaux on Saturday, December 6, 1840, with Sister of the Conception, still a novice and Sister Saint Brigitte, a lay Sister, and arrived on the tenth of the same month. On January 20, 1841, Sister Saint Paul came to join them. They opened a school and a novitiate at Barsac, in the suburbs of Bordeaux. Postulants came from different parts of France. Ecclesiastics, religious priests and even laymen, who knew Mother Saint Joseph, sent them.

The dowry hardly entered into account. If a young girl seemed to glory in her dowry, the good Mother refused her. If, on the contrary, an orphan or a young person, unprovided with a dowry seemed to her truly humble and disposed to give herself to God with all her heart, she considered herself very happy to receive her. She used to say, "Money is made in Heaven to pay the dowry of souls, bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, whom this Divine Master chooses for His spouses. I prefer to receive from Heaven than from families. God is much more generous and gives without counting." When they reproached her for the number of admissions without a dowry, she said: "Do you wish me, for a few hundred francs, to deprive so many souls of the happiness of the religious life, the Church of so many beautiful prayers and sacrifices, and the diocese of so many Sisters who will make Jesus Christ known and loved by little children? No! I fear God too much to reject the souls He has chosen."

The parish priest of Barsac and his parishioners understood and appreciated the value of the one whom Heaven had sent them and, when the authorities wished to transfer the novitiate from Barsac to Bordeaux, it was not an easy matter. The entire city protested. On August 26, 1842, M. Eloi Laroste, Mayor of Barsac, wrote to the Archbishop to plead the cause of the people under his jurisdiction. This touching letter did not prevent the authorities from seeking a site in the large city.

One day Mother Saint Joseph met two women who asked for an interview. They were teachers in a school situated in Cours d' Aquitaine. These ladies had opened a boarding- and day-school which had succeeded very well, but the house was not paid for. Finding themselves in financial difficulties, they offered to Mother Saint Joseph the transfer of the house, furniture and clientele, and manifested the desire to be received as postulants into the community. Mother Saint Joseph asked for time to reflect. The contract was signed in the presence of M. Saint-Marc, notary on November 10, 1843.

The two former proprietors, who had no vocation, left the community later and, after renting and furnishing another building, tried to take the plates, dishes and silver of their former house. Mother Saint Joseph opposed this plan. These women went among the children's families spreading lies about the Sisters, who were then unknown in Bordeaux. "The Sisters have," these women said, "by false promises, secured the confidence of honorable people, whom they now wish to despoil." In this way they succeeded in making the pupils forget the respect due to their teachers.

Mother Saint Joseph was a woman of prompt decisions. She closed the boarding-school, kept the day-school and rather than begin a scandalous lawsuit, submitted the affair to arbitration. "The illustrious M. Ravez was their arbiter and she obtained complete vindication. The novitiate was transferred to Bordeaux on June 13, 1844. God blessed the work undertaken in Bordeaux. As the number of postulants increased, the

Count of Calvimont consented to sell his home, to which the novitiate was thereupon transferred. When Mother Saint Joseph died on October 7, 1853, the congregation which she had established was the largest in the diocese.

CHAPTER XXIII

IN SAVOY

CARDINAL FESCH did not forget the Sisters of Saint Joseph when he went to Rome. Thanks to his title as member of the Sacred College, to his relatives, to his fortune, to his liberality and to his piety, the Cardinal had acquired an immense popularity in the city of the Popes. His constant thought was to improve the lot of the unfortunate and the condition of the poorer classes, and to do this the Sisters of Saint Joseph seemed most suitable. He had seen them at work in the hospital of Aix-les-Bains. He resolved to bring some to Rome, and, in his request, he specified that the former Superior of Aix should be a member of the community which would be organized. The designation of Sister Marcoux brings us back to Chambéry, where we left her in 1815.

The downfall of the Empire had upset the imperial family and had also changed the map of Europe. The Department of Mont Blanc had become the Duchy of Savoy. The Congresses of Vienna (November, 1814, and June, 1815) and the second Treaty of Paris had restored to the King of Sardinia the cradle of his house. When returning to his capital, Victor Emmanuel found Sisters of Saint Joseph there. Happy to show that he appreciated the only kind memory that the Revolution left in Savoy, he approved the Institute on August 27, 1816, and took under his protection the two establishments of Aix and Chambéry. Some years later, his brother Charles Felix "fully satisfied with the services rendered for the good of his people by the Sisters of Saint Joseph granted them by *letters patent* on September 23, 1823, the permission, according to the needs, of acquiring all kinds of property under whatever lawful title." [1]

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[1] M. le Chanoine Bouchage: *Chroniques des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Chambéry.* Vol. I, p. 176.

Previously, the duchy of Savoy numbered four dioceses, Geneva, Tarentaise, Maurienne and Chambéry. The Concordat united them into the single Diocese of Chambéry and Geneva, of which Lyons was the Metropolitan See. The treaties of 1815 followed by the Concordat of 1817, detached Chambéry from Lyons and reëstablished, one after the other, the four dioceses of Savoy, raising that of Chambéry to the rank of archdiocese. It gained in prestige what it had lost in area.

These changes had their effects on the Motherhouse of the Chartreux. Before 1815, when the young girls of Savoy asked to enter the congregation, they were sent to make their novitiate at Saint-Etienne. The journey was long and costly. This condition was disagreeable from another point of view, when Savoy was not a part of France, and Chambéry no longer had Lyons for its Metropolitan See. For the parents to send their daughters to Saint-Etienne or to Lyons was to expatriate them. The number of vocations suffered.

Archbishop de Solle explained all these inconveniences to the Superior General of the Institute, asking her to open a novitiate for Savoy. Mother Saint John understood the reasons given by the venerable prelate and authorized the creation of a novitiate at Chambéry. This novitiate could not be opened in the house occupied by the Sisters in Rue de la Cathédrale. They had to find a larger place, and money was lacking. As it was a question of the gory of God, the enterprise was judged necessary. The Sisters relied on Divine Providence. They sought the necessary house. In Faubourg Montmélian, they found an old house built in the seventeenth century. The spacious house, surrounded with courts and gardens, situated within a short distance of the cathedral and within easy access to all sections of the city, suited in every way; but there were many alterations to be made. The Sisters decided to buy it. It was acquired for thirteen thousand two hundred francs. That was a large sum for those who had nothing.

The Sisters had relied on Divine Providence and Father Bigex, Vicar General, and Father Rochaix, parish priest of Saint Francis de Sales, were the instruments of God. Father

Rochaix, the day of the sale, deposited, with the seller, ten thousand two hundred forty francs. The Superior promised to pay the remainder within three years. Repairs were begun at once. The Sisters left the workmen only what they themselves could not do. One day, Canon Rey, the Archbishop's secretary, visited the Sisters and found them performing laborers' work. He asked the Superior how she thought of providing for the wants of the community and paying the expenses of the repairs. "I do not know," she answered, "we had for our entire fortune but one pistole (one dollar and ninety cents) and I lost it a moment ago." Canon Rey opened his purse and gave the Superior sixty francs.

When the repairs were finished, the novitiate was opened and candidates applied for entrance. A Mistress of Novices had to be appointed. Mother Saint John thought she could make no better choice than that of the Superior of Aix, Mother Saint Regis. Archbishop de Solle demanded the autonomy of the convents in his archdiocese, as soon as he had his novitiate. This could not be refused. It is true, Mother Saint John could have recalled the Sisters to Lyons; but she did not wish to do so, as that would disorganize the works of Chambéry. Mother Marcoux was implicitly under obedience to the Archbishop of Chambéry, when Cardinal Fesch requested her for Rome, where a vast apostolate was to be opened to the Institute.

Saint Michael's Hospital, built on the banks of the Tiber, is placed in the first rank of the numerous benevolent establishments in the capital of Christianity. This monumental edifice is divided into four sections,—one section for the old men, one for the old women, another for young men and the fourth for young women. The Cardinal intended the Sisters of Saint Joseph for the direction of the section for young women. Pious VII, to whom he explained his wish, approved, but he died before the realization of the project. The Cardinal resumed discussions with his successor, Leo XII. The new Pontiff, favorable in every way to the ideas of the prelate, charged his Secretary of State to negotiate the affair with Paris, with the Apostolic Nuncio and with the Archbishop of Lyons. In the name of the Holy Father, he asked them to send fifteen Sisters of Saint Joseph from Lyons to Rome, Sister Saint John Marcoux to be among the number. These Sisters would have under their care not only the section for young women, but that of the old women also.

As the Superior of Chambéry was to be of the Roman Caravan, the Secretary of State informed the Archbishop of that diocese. We quote a part of the letter addressed to him:

"His Holiness, always preoccupied in doing good for the poor classes, has decided to bring from France a certain number of these Religious known as the Sisters of Saint Jospeh whose motherhouse is in Lyons. Accordingly, His Holiness proposes to establish these Religious in his States. The Holy Father wishes to confide to these Religious the direction of many young women and the poor old women who are gathered in the apostolic hospital, Saint Michael à Ripa. These Religious must direct, in piety, the young women and the old ones, care for their infirmary and instruct the young women in the silk, cotton and linen industries. They will be obliged to take care of the clothing, which will be entrusted to them. At the same time they will preside over a novitiate of Sisters, which will be established in the hospital.

"I have written on this subject by order of His Holiness to the Nuncio of Paris, to obtain the consent of His Most Christian Majesty. However, as the principal house of these Religious is in Lyons, I have written also, by order of the Holy Father, to the administrator of this diocese to send fifteen Sisters, and I have manifested the desire of His Holiness that Sister Marcoux be among these Sisters. The Archbishop Administrator of the Diocese of Lyons informed me that he has already arranged that the wishes of the Holy Father be fully accomplished. He added that Sister Marcoux belongs to the Archdiocese of Chambéry.

"That is why I address Your Lordship that it may be pleasing to you to express to Sister Marcoux the will of the Holy Father and to make the necessary arrangements in order that she be ready to join her other companions when they pass through the place of her habitation to go to Rome. I notify you further that, as for the expense of the journey and of everything that will be needed by the Sisters, the Holy Father has charged, through me, the Papal Nuncio in Paris, in order that, by mutual consent of the Archbishop Administrator of the Diocese of Lyons, he provide for everything."

"Jules Marie, Cardinal de la Somaglia."

This letter met with no objection. The Superior of Chambéry, summoned to the Archbishop's residence, received the order to go without delay to Lyons and to place herself at the disposal of the administrator. This she did within a few days.

In Lyons, they were hastening the preparations for the departure but the Superior General had some trouble in selecting, at once, the fourteen subjects. However, on July 2, the Feast of the Visitation, everything was ready. On this day, the Sisters of Saint Joseph renew their religious vows. The fifteen chosen ones proclaimed aloud and with special fervor their wish to be entirely and forever at the service of God and souls; and, during the day, they went to Fourvière to recommend to the Blessed Virgin the mission they were leaving and the one they were about to undertake.

The departure was to have taken place in the morning, when suddenly orders came from the Archbishop to postpone it until further notice. Letters from Rome informed Archbishop de Pins that the French government looked unfavorably on the establishment of the Sisters in the place where the uncle of the Emperor resided. The Cardinal was held in such suspicion by the French government that the foundation of a religious community in the city where he lived was sufficient cause for offense.

A correspondence took place immediately between Rome, Lyons and Paris. It was certain that the prosecution of this plan would cause real difficulties for the congregation. The affair was postponed and was not resumed again at Lyons. A little later Chambéry founded Turin and Turin founded Rome (1839) which remained attached to Chambéry, over which the French government had no control.

At once, the caravan of fifteen Sisters, which was halted at the moment of departure, was requested by two prelates who wanted them without delay. The Cardinal who had not succeeded in the city of the Popes, judged the occasion propitious to endow Ajaccio, his birthplace, with a community of these Sisters.

Archbishop de Pins thought that the Sisters of Saint Joseph should indeed have their place in Languedoc, in his territory of Oulias. The failure of the Roman project did not grieve him. It cost him dearly to send Sisters to Italy, since they were so much needed in France.

Mother Saint John desired to keep Mother Marcoux in Lyons to make her the assistant. Her wish did not prevail. To satisfy the two prelates, it was decided that one half of the group would go toward the south of France, and the other half to Corsica. This time the plan succeeded.

CHAPTER XXIV

THROUGH ROME TO CORSICA

GOD wanted the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Corsica, and to lead them thither His wisdom arranged events in such a manner as to permit Him to show them the way. Without this formal indication of God's providence, it would seem strange that the motherhouse, so simple a hive in formation, thought so soon of swarming beyond the seas. The declaration having come from Rome, Mother Saint John sent Sister Saint Louis Chaland and four other Sisters to the distant island.

They left Lyons on September 17, 1824, and had to wait twenty-seven days in Marseilles for the departure of the *Marie Antoine*. They were the first French Sisters, since the Revolution, to cross the sea to establish a community. The Cardinal had already sent Brothers of the Christian Schools to the island to teach young boys. He now sent Sisters to instruct the young girls. When the Sisters arrived, it may be said that Corsica was in expectation. The entire population of Ajaccio, led by the mayor and his council, went to the dock to receive them. They had to pass between two human hedges to reach the place destined for them, and to which they were introduced by the civil authorities. After that, they were shown the classrooms ready to receive the children without delay. The Cardinal wished that the school be free and opened to everybody, rich and poor, since there were no other schools. Monsignor Sébastiani de La Porta, accompanied by several Ecclesiastics, visited the Sisters the next day. He gave them, as spiritual father, Abbé Ange Cuneo D'Ornana and, for confessor, Canon Arrighi.

After a few days, a pharmacy was opened near the school, Sister Saint Regis in charge of it. The pharmacy and the pharmacist were soon so well appreciated that, in 1826, the administrators of the hospital asked the Superior to yield both of them. Seeing in this request the occasion for doing a great amount of good, the Superior agreed that the pharmacy become the property of the hospital on condition that the free distribution of remedies to the poor be continued. This condition was accepted, and the poor still benefit by it. Sister Saint Regis became the first nurse of the civil hospital, in which all was changed with respect to order, cleanliness and care of the sick.

In 1830 the community received a visitor from Lyons. He was Father Barrêt, the confessor at the motherhouse. Four Sisters came with him. The Sisters were greatly surprised, as his visit had not been announced. This unexpected visit was brought about by the presence, in Lyons, of the Superior of Ajaccio, who had gone there to discuss the business of the community. Mother Saint John retained her in Lyons.

Archbishop de Pins invested Father Barrêt with all power. The latter gave a retreat and according to directions placed Sister Saint Regis at the head of the school. She was given special authority over all the convents on the island, established or to be established. The distance from Lyons made this necessary. Sister Saint Callixtus, her sister, assumed charge of the foundling asylum, which was later united to the hospital. In 1833, Archbishop de Pins appointed Father Crozet, as chaplain for the Sisters of Ajaccio. Sister Saint Callixtus, in 1834, became the assistant of her sister. The establishment in Corsica comprised only free schools. Mother Saint Regis, realizing the need of religious instruction for the nobility, wrote to Cardinal Fesch asking his advice on this subject. The latter invited her to come to Rome to discuss this all important question. He would assume all the expenses of the journey.

Mother Saint John, informed of this invitiation, approved of the trip and advised the Superior to ask the chaplain to accompany her. They notified Bishop Casanelli d'Istria, the new Bishop of Ajaccio, and on May 13, 1835, our travelers went in the only stagecoach which was then in Corsica. It took them three days to go to Bastia where they embarked. In passing Corté, two things struck them: the importance of the city and the lack of restraint of the youth. At Bastia, the same painful observation. Everywhere, they saw the children of the people completely given up to self. In their imaginations, communities were already opened for this child population. Obliged to wait several days at Bastia before sailing, our travelers profited by the delay to see the pastors of the city; and the project of a boarding-school for Bastia was outlined in these interviews. Contrary to custom, they had to begin to busy themselves with the wealthy class, as resources did not permit free schools. Mother Saint Regis, while planning the establishing of a boarding-school, secretly hoped to do something for the poorer children when she received more power to act.

On May 19, the captain of the *Michelina* set sail in spite of the persistent calm of the sea. The boat arrived at Civita Vecchia on May 26. The crossing had taken eight days and they had seven days of quarantine before going further, because cholera was raging in Toulon and Marseilles. Father Crozet will continue the narrative:

"During these days of rigorous sequestration there occurred two feasts of obligation, namely, the Ascension and the Sunday within the octave. It was not possible to hear Mass in the tower where there was neither chapel nor altar. Mass was said only in the Bureau of Health, situated at the other extremity of the port. On the Eve of the Ascension, the port being quite agitated, the travelers were informed that they would be obliged to hear Mass from the top of the tower or from the windows, and that a little bell would warn them of the most important parts of the Holy Sacrifice.

"The Mother Superior inflamed with holy zeal and supported by all the other passengers, protested energetically, although with much respect, against a method so little suited to fulfil a duty of obligation. The next day a launch took the passengers to the Bureau of Health. They were stationed in the window of the office where they could see and hear the priest.

"When the quarantine was removed, the travelers made their entrance into the Eternal City. At noon, Mother Saint Regis and Father Crozet were in sight of the dome of Saint Peter's Church.

Some hours later, they arrived at the Falconieri Palace, *Via Giulia,* where they were welcomed by the eminent Cardinal, who invited them to remain in his palace during their entire visit to Rome.

"His Eminence regulated in a general manner, that the Mother Superior remain in the palace every morning until after dinner which took place about two o'clock in the afternoon; while the chaplain, if it pleased him, could visit the city on foot accompanied by a valet in livery. After assisting at Mass and performing her pious exercises, Mother Saint Regis went through the different rooms of the palace adjusting and arranging its furnishings. She had breakfast with the chaplain. After this, she went to the apartments of His Eminence to confer with him about the interests of the mission in Ajaccio.

"The Cardinal likewise regulated that all the afternoons be devoted to visiting the pious monuments in Rome. He reserved to himself to plan their daily itinerary. The first time they went out, they visited Madame Laetitia, Napoleon's mother, who had her palace in Piazza Venezia. She received them most graciously, for indeed she loved to meet a Religious from Ajaccio who brought her news of her former friends, whose memory was always dear to her.

"On the other days they visited the wonderful Church of Saint Peter, the famous basilicas of Saint John Lateran, with its relics, its cloister and its Scala Sancta, which they piously ascended on their knees, according to custom; of Saint Mary Major, of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, of Saint Paul without the walls, the shrine of Saint Paul at Tre Fontane, Saint Laurence, Saint Sebastian and their catacombs, Saint Agnes, Saint Mary in Cosmedin, Our Lady of Victory, former titular church of His Eminence; the Ara Coeli, the museum of the Capitol, the churches of the Gésu, Saint Ignatius and others.

"On the eve of Pentecost, His Eminence announced his intention of going to the Sistine Chapel the next day. He wished to give his guests a most exquisite pleasure. On Pentecost, about nine o'clock in the morning, three beautiful carriages each drawn by two horses left the Falconieri Palace. In the first was the Cardinal in *cappa magna* with his majordomo in full dress, in the second was his secretary, in purple *zimarra,* and the chaplain, and in the third, was the Mother Superior with an attendant."

Mother Saint Regis and her attendant were placed in the gallery for ladies, whence they could easily view the entire chapel. This chapel is divided into a vast enclosure, which contains the altar, the Pope's throne, the cardinals' seats and three galleries, one destined for the sovereigns, princes and princesses; the second, for ladies of less elevated rank; and the third reserved for the secular and regular clergy of all religious orders.

What a magnificent spectacle was offered to the pious gaze of the humble Sister on this memorable occasion. About forty venerable old men clothed in the purple of kings were seated as on so many thrones. One of them was dearer than all the others, because he was her father, her Archbishop. On account of his seniority in the Sacred College, he performed the most important duties close to the Sovereign Pontiff, with a gravity which recalled the ceremonies of the primate's cathedral at Lyons. There was also this other old man, more venerable and more venerated than all the others together, because he was the Vicar of Christ.

Twelve days later Corpus Christi was celebrated. One knows how solemn and majestic is the procession which is made under the colonnades of the Vatican. Cardinal Fesch wished his guests to enjoy this unique spectacle of the Christian world. On the previous evening, he sent to have very advantageous places under the colonnades reserved for them.

> "This procession was composed of members of all the religious orders which go back at least to the thirteenth century, of all the Roman chapters, of the pastors of Rome, of the ecclesiastical institutes, of the cardinals, of the Pope's household and finally the Sovereign Pontiff himself, who, seated in an immense palanquin, carried in his hands, the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament. To the sound of military music, came the noble guard and the riflemen, all on horseback, preceded by their bands. It took three hours for the cortège to pass, while the cannon of Castle Saint Angelo made its solemn salutes resound, and the bell of Saint Peter's deluged with its joyous peals the Place du Vatican and its neighborhood.

"To crown his kindness and to complete the happiness of the two pilgrims, there remained for the Cardinal to obtain for them the special favor of a private audience with the Holy Father. In the morning of June 20, His Eminence was notified that His Holiness would receive his protégés in the Library of the Vatican, about six o'clock in the evening of that day.

"At the appointed time, they went to the Vatican. The Pope's chamberlain briefly explained the ceremonial for presentation. The Mother Superior prostrated herself at the Venerable Pontiff's feet and kissed them. 'Arise, Mother Superior,' the Pope said kindly to her. He then asked her several questions in Italian which she answered to the best of her ability. Gregory XVI spoke with great kindness of the Bishop of Ajaccio and of his works, among others, the seminary. Mother Saint Regis spoke about her congregation, her communities in Corsica and her family. Gregory XVI blessed her, the chaplain, her congregation and all those she recommended to him; and the audience was over."

The business which brought Mother Saint Regis to Rome being concluded, she thought of rejoining her community. After receiving the last blessing of the prelate, our two travelers were conducted to the port of Ripa-Grande and went to Livorno [1] by way of the Tiber, and from there to Bastia, whence they traveled to Ajaccio. They had left this city on May 13, 1835, and returned on July 6 of the same year. The journey had lasted almost two months.

From these conferences with the Cardinal, Mother Saint Regis carried away a plan which upset her first calculations. Her plan was simple. When the peasant children had been provided with schools, she would establish a school for the children of the upper classes. A boarding-school would be opened near the free schools and the teachers would form but one community. The Cardinal desired even more than that. He wished a complete separation of both schools, the teachers of each forming separate communities. It was more imposing, but it was also more costly. The Cardinal proposed two ways to defray the expenses. First, he imposed a generous sacrifice on himself, for the prelate could make sacrifices. He had a gallery of paintings which represented a fortune. He decided to send a certain number to Lyons to be sold for the benefit of the building. To complete defraying the expenses, and at the same time to render a service to the young girls of Corsica, he appropriated a sum of money to be used in teaching them to spin hemp,—an industry which would provide occupation, and, at the same time, be a means of earning their living in later life. The present profits would help toward the erection of the building. He also obtained from the government through the agency of a friend of the Bonapartes, a free concession, to the community, of the land on which the school would be built.

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[1] Elizabeth Seton sailed from this port when she left Italy to found, some years later, the Sisters of Charity in the United States.

After informing her Superior General of the plan of His Eminence, and obtaining her consent, Mother Saint Regis began the organization of the spinning class. She bought hemp, sent to France for spinning-wheels, assembled some young workers and finally opened what she called *L'Atelier Saint Joseph.* This innovation delighted everybody. Unfortunately, when the hemp was made into rope they found no market in which to sell the merchandise, and had to abandon the enterprise after a year of trial. The paintings which were to realize a large sum of money found no purchasers. Money was lacking to begin the building and, as the land was not used for the specified purpose, it had to be returned to the government.

Fortunately, Mother Saint Regis was not one of those whom obstacles baffle. Trusting no longer to human sources, she turned with more confidence to God and resumed her first plan, of uniting the boarding-school with the existing schools, so as to have, for all educational works, but one community. It was simpler, easier to carry out and more conformable to the spirit of the Institute. This new project, approved by the Superior General and the Archbishop, was put into execution as promptly as possible. Having means neither to buy nor to build, Mother Saint Regis contented herself with renting a house belonging to the hospital and almost adjoining the convent. This house which the Sisters bought later, was situated on the beautiful Gulf of Ajaccio.

Father Sarrebayrouse, the Vicar General, drew up a very elaborate program of studies. Mother Saint Callixtus visited the best institutions in France to study the traditions, methods and customs. When everything was ready, the Superior General sent the necessary Sisters from Lyons. The academy was approved and the boarding-school was opened in 1837. The first directress was Sister Alphonse who later became Superior. The schools of Ajaccio prospered so well that when the laws of secularization demanded their closing, the community of Ajaccio had more than sixty Sisters and between twelve and fourteen hundred pupils. At this sad time, the boarding-school was transferred to Italy.[2]

In 1838, the authorities asked for the Sisters of Saint Joseph for the schools in Calvi, and for the hospital in Bastia. Mother Saint John authorized Mother Saint Regis to make the two foundations. In 1839, the Bishop of Ajaccio, happy at the success of the pupils, asked Mother Saint Regis to found at Bastia the long wished for boarding-school. With the approval of her Superior General, Mother Saint Regis went to the mayor of Bastia to consult him about this project. The mayor favored it and indicated, as a site, a building in which there had been a Masonic Lodge. The house was very suitable. It belonged to M. Carbuccia, a celebrated lawyer, with whom it was very easy to arrange matters. Six months later, five Sisters from Ajaccio went to Bastia to open the boarding-school. The Masonic Lodge became a pious oratory, in which were sung the praises of God. An infant school opened soon after; then, finally came the time for the day-schools which, for lack of resources, could not be opened sooner.

In this same year, communities of Saint Joseph were founded at Corté, Sartène and Bonifacio. Later it was the turn of Fozzano and Alata. One understands that all this work could not have been accomplished without trouble and suffering. The apostolic souls accepted all in advance, knowing well that the only money that has currency for the redemption of souls is coined of faith, confidence, sacrifice and love. Corsica never had a novitiate. Since communication with France was very difficult, the Sisters were dispensed from going to Lyons for the annual retreat. Ajaccio was the center of reunion until traveling became easier.

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[2] See: *La Congrégation des Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Lyon.* Paris, Letouzey.

CHAPTER XXV

"A RACE OF GIANTS"

ARCHBISHOP DE PINS owned a patrimonial domain at Oulias in the Archdiocese of Albi. The former Superior of Chambéry led one of the groups of the Roman caravan to open a school there. All was *ex tempore* in the foundation of Oulias. Archbishop de Pins thought only of using, as quickly as possible, the Sisters who were to go to Rome before they were dispersed; and he deliberated neither with the Archbishop of Albi, the parish priest nor with the civil authorities of the city. His project, therefore, presented little chance of success. When the Sisters came on August 13, 1824, opposition arose on all sides. The Protestants who were very numerous declared that they did not wish a Catholic school in their midst. The parish priest said that he did not find the foundation opportune, and the Archbishop showed his astonishment at not being notified.

The *Castle of Oulias* was at that time an old ramshackle building which, having sheltered some survivors of the ancient Benedictine Abbey of Vielmur, served as a home for the poor who were in search of free lodging. Furniture was lacking and resources were small. Let us add that, though opposite the large city, the site seemed wild and solitary and the people rather uncivilized. Our Lyonnaises had much trouble in making themselves understood, not knowing the idiom of the place. All these things rendered doubtful the success of the plan conceived by Superiors. However, some benevolent people interested themselves in the Sisters, and looked for means of solving the difficulties.

Sister Marcoux explained the predicament of Oulias and the offers of Saint-Pons to the Superior General who told her to return to Lyons to discuss the affair in detail. The former Superior of Chambéry, authorized to change her route to greet her former community, arrived there unexpectedly. The Sisters were very joyful when the portress announced the visit of the venerable Mother, who left them without saying the goodby which was too painful. The pleasure of Archbishop de Solle was hardly less great; and one saw hope revive in the community when the prelate commanded her whom he wished to work in his own archdiocese, to prolong her stay until he had negotiated with the Superior General and Archbishop de Pins. The result of these conferences was that Sister Marcoux passed definitely from obedience to the Archbishop of Lyons to that of the Archbishop of Chambéry.

That is how one of the first twelve members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyons became the first Superior General[1] of the Congregation of Chambéry, which had but two houses in 1824; but from which in a short time sprang the Congregations of Saint Jean de Maurienne, Moutiers in Tarentaise, Turin, Pignerol and Aosta. These, their bishops separated from Chambéry, as Archbishop de Solle had separated Chambéry from Lyons.

The foundation of Oulias was not abandoned. Mother Saint John appointed, as Superior, Sister Saint Angela Chomel who was a member of the group sent to Languedoc. It had its painful beginning;—poverty, difficulties and suffering. All that is the seal placed by God on divine works to guarantee their duration. It is something worthy of note, that no work produces supernatural fruits, if it has not taken root in humility, sacrifice and endurance.

Everything was settled finally. Some good people helped in the necessary arrangements and the Sisters' industry and spirit of poverty did the rest. In the meantime, the parish priest realized the treasure which Divine Providence sent him, and took it upon himself to interest the Archbishop in the newcomers. Archbishop Brault was just on his pastoral visit to the Canton of Brassac. He visited the community and Saint Joseph's cause was won.

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[1] Mother Félicité, Mother Saint John Marcoux's successor, made the following foundations: Denmark, 1856; Brazil, South America, 1858; Norway and Sweden, 1862, and Russia, 1863. Rome was annexed to Chambéry in 1876. Brussels and Iceland (1896) were established by Denmark.

Under the direction of Mother Saint Angela, the work developed rapidly. To the classes for day pupils, there was added a boarding-school and, soon after, a novitiate was established, since it was practically impossible to send subjects to Lyons, the distance being too great and the means of traveling too difficult. Candidates came in large numbers to the newly opened novitiate. Oulias took part in this general restoration which marked the beginning of the nineteenth century; the Lyonnais seed was good and the Albigensian soil fertile. Thus, every year, Oulias saw the number of its subjects increase, and the reputation of their fervor, spread by faithful correspondents, wrung from Eugénie de Guérin exclamations of admiration with regard to the "holy convent of the mountains."

> "Additions were necessary to shelter the ever-increasing family. The chaplaincy, the chapel, the boarding-school and other dependencies were successively built. The pious hive of Oulias was soon rich enough to send out swarms. Priests, pious Christians, colleges and towns appealed for their services. These establishments were generally made under conditions which were conducive to the spirit of sacrifice rather than to self-love. Self-denial and confidence in God supplied everything. Poverty never prevented the daughters of Saint Joseph from going and staying where God permitted them to exercise their devotion. To them, as to all those who seek, first, the Kingdom of God, the rest was to be supplied.
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> "Soon the fame of the community went beyond the region of the Albigensians. Its Sisters were introduced into the Dioceses of Rodez, Carcassonne, Montauban and Toulouse. The community numbered three hundred fifty-seven Sisters and about twenty novices. The little nucleus of the four foundresses had almost multiplied a hundredfold." [2]

The Archbishop of Albi saw the progress of the community of Oulias. He wished to have it under his complete obedience and asked to raise it to the rank of motherhouse. He had great difficulty in obtaining this; there were many journeys and conferences. The Lyons congregation was now well established and quite determined to relinquish no more of its foundations. The Archbishop of Lyons was of a like opinion. Nevertheless, in 1835, the community of Oulias was recognized as an independent congregation, under the authority of the Archbishop of Albi. The canonical separation never changed anything in the friendly relations between the Motherhouse of Lyons and that of Oulias, its daughter.

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[2] M. l'Abbé Rivière, professeur à l'Université de Strasbourg: *La Communauté de Saint Joseph d'Oulias,* p. 15.

We have said that the inhabitants of Saint-Pons, in the Department of Hérault, had requested the Sisters of Saint Joseph to establish a community among them. The request sent to the motherhouse and referred to the council, was granted after mature deliberation. On September 15, 1824, they accepted; and, on October 26, half of the group for Languedoc left Oulias and went to Saint-Pons. Under the direction of Sister du Coeur Perret, this city soon had flourishing schools and a novitiate. For a time there was a rumor that Saint-Pons would be separated from Lyons.

God blessed the works of the Institute in such a visible manner that appeals came to the Motherhouse of the Chartreux from all sections. Whenever she could do so, Mother Saint John answered these requests; but, though subjects came in large numbers, it was impossible to satisfy everybody. Besides the local parishes of the Diocese of Lyons, always the first supplied, convents of Saint Joseph were opened in many other dioceses. They had accepted the affiliation of several communities of Ardèche, among others that of Vesseaux, in 1828, and that of Allanches in the district of Tournon, which sent Mother Saint John the following petition:

"We, the undersigned, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Allanches, have the honor of presenting our very respectful homage to the Reverend Mother General of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyons, and we earnestly supplicate her to accept the affiliation of which we recognize the necessity that good work may continue. For that purpose, we send our Superior to make all the arrangements she finds necessary; and we approve in advance all the conditions which she will accept in our name. We confidently hope that the Superior General will be willing, for the love of good and the glory of God, to admit us among the number of her daughters."

A priest wrote to Mother Saint John:

"There is, in my parish, a group of devout women who are called Sisters. They live in community and have a Superior although they have taken no vows. They occupy themselves with the schools and the children. Send us a Superior from Lyons, to teach and train them."

We have in our possession a collection of letters full of praise for these modest workers; almost all have come from priests whose apostolate they assisted. Let us quote a few of them:

"Since I have had the happiness of having this convent in my parish, I have had the greatest consolation; and I see that the Lord is pleased to bless my people. With the assistance of a religious community, priests can do something; without them, their ministry is paralyzed."

from another:

"With this spirit of humility and perfect self-denial which distinguishes them, the Sisters have done immense good."

and again:

"M. P. is surprised that two Sisters have been able to do so much and to be sufficient for so many employments."

another writes:

"They are more loved and respected than the priests."

If from some places, the motherhouse was congratulated with the reports of the affiliations, in others subordination was not wanted. Each bishop was anxious to have a motherhouse and novitiate for his own diocese. Mother Saint John was not surprised at that. It was the original idea of the founders and, until the Revolution, each convent had its autonomy. The constitutions which bear, according to the expression of Archbishop Ramadié, of the Archdiocese of Albi, "the stamp of antiquity and nobility which makes them venerable," say:

> "The Sisters of the congregation will recognize as their lawful Superiors, the bishops of the dioceses in which they reside. They will always have for them a deep respect, a great submission and a very exact obedience in all things which they command them, considering them as holding the place of Jesus Christ, invested with His character and His authority over them.
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> "The bishops can visit the houses and the Sisters in their dioceses, and demand an account from the Superiors, of both the spiritual and temporal state of their houses. They can make rules for the general good of the house and the conduct of the Sisters, in order to maintain or renew the full observance of the present constitutions. They may also, if they deem it useful or necessary, change the Superiors and Sisters from one house to another, and even send them out of their dioceses when other bishops ask for them."[3]

The Archbishop of Lyons had been wisely inspired in introducing into the Institute a central government which attached the communities to one another and placed them under the direction of a Superior General, who, knowing the needs and resources of each, could establish a wise balance, which favored the good functioning of the works of the congregation. He had been wisely inspired in prescribing a single novitiate in which all the members of the congregation would be imbued with the same spirit and find the necessary means for the proper religious training.

This indispensable reorganization, the two founders, Bishop de Maupas and Father Médaille, would have surely exacted if they could have foreseen that the "Little Design" would assume such great proportions and that the Sisters of Saint Joseph would one day cover the globe. Nevertheless, the

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[3] *Constitutions,* première édition, 1693, p. 23.

Archbishop could not take from the bishops their rights of jurisdiction over the communities in their dioceses. To decide all difficulties, there was an understanding among the prelates and it was agreed that henceforth the communities established by the Motherhouse of Lyons would remain attached to their center, and thus disputes and demands were closed.

When everything was settled, Archbishop de Pins issued the following ordinance:

"We, Jean Paul Gaston de Pins, Archbishop of Amasie, Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Lyons and Vienne, Peer of France.

"The blessings that the Almighty has been pleased to spread over the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, making us desire that they draw Divine protection more and more upon themselves and their pious works; and imposing on ourselves the obligation of corresponding with celestial favors by an exact vigilance over this privileged portion of the flock confided to our pastoral care, and to provide that the great number of these Sisters will not weaken their regularity and inestimable unity of spirit which is the strength and beauty of their Institute;

"Wishing to assure to all and to each of our dear daughters, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the valuable and important fruits of a complete novitiate in the motherhouse where they will draw at the same time the spirit of their state, a solid piety and the knowledge necessary to them;

"The Holy Name of God having been invoked and the Archiepiscopal Council heard, we have decreed what follows:

"1. 'Dating from January 1, 1829, no Sister of Saint Joseph, without exception, will be admitted to holy profession until after spending an entire year in the Novitiate of the Motherhouse of Lyons, so that everyone will spend there two or three months before the reception and nine or ten months after the reception in the space of two years prescribed by their constitutions from which we do not intend to deviate in any way.

"2. 'We authorize the Superior General to shorten this trial, even by six months, when she will judge it suitable in favor of the lay Sisters.

"3. 'Copies of the present decree will be sent to Mother Saint John who will have them entered on the registers of the congregation and who will testify for us, at least every three months, the execution of the present ordinance.

"4. 'We beg the Vicar General, the Superior of the said congregation, to testify for us, at least every three months, the execution of the present ordinance.'

"Given at Lyons, December 23, 1828,
Jean Paul Gaston de Pins,
Archbishop of Amasie, Administrator Apostolic of Lyons
For the Archbishop:
Allibert, Secretary."

The Vicar General who was to give an account of the execution of this ordinance was, in 1828, Father Charles Cholleton, nephew of Father Claude Cholleton, of saintly memory. The nephew, like the uncle, had great love for the community. He assisted Mother Saint John in her delicate and painful task. The Novitiate of Saint-Pons was closed in spite of the regrets of the Bishop of Montpellier, who did not wish to oppose the Archbishop of Lyons in removing the novitiate from his diocese. Montpeyroux, Bédarieux and Mèze, which opened shortly after, received their subjects from the Motherhouse of Lyons and had to send their postulants there.

The means of communication becoming easier from day to day, the difficulty of traveling was lessened. "Holy souls increased and flourished at the motherhouse under the impetus and influence of the worthy Superior General." The young subjects could see that perfection and happiness were in the accomplishment of the Rule. Without this observance no interior progress is possible, for there is no serenity of heart, and God refuses the graces which would have made the duty easy and agreeable.

One must take the will of God as it is; the more one wishes to lighten the burden, the heavier it is rendered. Saint Augustine said: "My God it is an effect of Your mercy as well as of Your justice that every spirit outside the Rule finds in itself its punishment and pain." From the example of their virtuous Superior, the young postulants learned to pass, without effort, from prayer to action and from action to prayer.

CHAPTER XXVI

MEMORIES OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

ON the southern bank of Lake Léman, at Evian, was situated the former monastery of the Friars Minor of the Observance, called Gray Friars. This monastery, established about the year 1635, had undergone, like so many other religious houses, the storms of the Revolution. It emerged devastated, dismantled and on the verge of collapse. It was to these ruins that the charity of two priests, commonly called the brothers Picollet, had dreamed of bringing a community of Religious, vowed to the instruction of children and to works of zeal. To buy the monastery and the enclosure of the Gray Friars, to appeal to the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyons,—such was the project conceived and executed with an ardor worthy of the enterprise.

On October 22, 1822, the three Sisters of Saint Joseph who had left Lyons, arrived at Evian, where, without delay, they opened a school for little girls. The next year a boarding-school adjoined the free school. Soon after, came the establishing of a pharmacy destined to provide for the needs of the city and near-by towns.

"God blessed the work and above all the indefatigable devotion of Father Francis Picollet, whose faith accomplished wonders. He was the firm support and visible providence of the young community. The latter, rivaling the holy priest in fervor and zeal, gave the edifying example of lives of prayer, privation and hard labor sustained with joy. This example bore fruit.

"Soon, some young women of the city begged the happiness of sharing a life entirely consecrated to God. They were sent to the Motherhouse of Lyons to make their novitiate. These new recruits, the first fruits from Savoy, after sufficient training, returned to Evian, where little by little, the ranks of the community were increased. Among these Religious we will mention Sister Aloysia, future Superior General of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Annecy. The frequent requests for admission, and the increasing importance of the community made the Sisters think of creating a novitiate. It opened in 1824.

"Some years later the Reverend Mother General of Lyons gave a proof of the interest she had for her daughters of Chablais by placing at their head Mother Saint John Bruyère, who succeeded Mother Jane Frances Collet, foundress and first Superior of Evian. One reads in the annals of the community of Evian: 'Her government was an era of happiness for the community. United in heart and mind with her assistant, Sister Aloysia, she worked for the advancement of the kingdom of God in souls and the prosperity of the community.' "[1]

The same year in which the foundation of Evian was made, the Motherhouse of Lyons yielding to the entreaties of Father Martin, parish priest of Mégève, a "Curé of Ars of the mountains of Savoy," consented to give Sisters for the classes. Later, they added the direction of the hospital. An important event which happened in the following year affected the two convents of Evian and Mégève.

We have previously seen the dismemberment of the Diocese (created by the Concordat between Napoleon and the Pope) of Chambéry and Geneva by the Concordat of 1817, which led to the reëstablishment of the four dioceses of Savoy. In 1822, Monsignor de Thiollaz, Vicar General of Chambéry, was appointed Bishop of Annecy. In 1832, he took possession of his See. Although this diocese had already existed, Bishop de Thiollaz was the first prelate who had the title. All his predecessors, among them Saint Francis de Sales, had borne the title Bishop of Geneva.

When Bishop de Thiollaz arrived in Annecy, he showed great joy on finding the Sisters of Saint Joseph in his docese. He manifested regret when the noviate opened in Evian in 1824, because he thought it should be in Annecy, whither he planned to transfer it at once. This desire was legitimate and the Motherhouse of Lyons would willingly have approved his plan, if the ideas of the Bishop on the subject of teaching had been those of the Institute. In spite of all his kindly feelings toward the Sisters, in spite of the fact that he considered them auxiliaries of the clergy, Bishop de Thiollaz wrote in his diary:

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[1] *Mère Louise-Flavie Blanc, Supérieure Générale des Soeurs de Saint Joseph d'Annecy,* p. 13.

> "As I do not wish to stand in the way of the Great Visitation, I will adopt the Sisters of Saint Joseph into my diocese only on the strict condition that they restrict themselves to teaching catechism, reading, writing, arithmetic and manual training, without any higher instruction whatsoever."

The Institute could not accept this condition. It was contrary to its customs. The program of Bishop de Thiollaz was that of the day-schools. This program would not be sufficient in every school. In the greater number of schools directed by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, particularly in the boarding-school of Evian, the pupils pursued advanced studies, and the Sisters proposed to raise the standard still higher. The novitiate remained where it was, dependent on Lyons. This brought about disagreements, which made the position of the Superior of Evian very delicate, but did not prevent the opening of two more convents in Savoy in 1827, those of Sallanches and Thorens.

For a long time these two cities had been pleading with the Superior General to give them Sisters. Mother Saint John hesitated, as there were so many requests. Subjects were not numerous and circumstances seemed hardly favorable. The entreaties were made so urgently that she yielded to the pious and zealous priest of Sallanches, and sent Sisters for its school and, as she had none for Thorens, she wrote to Mother Jane Frances to admit to her community of Evian the subjects necessary for this mission. The next year Mother Jane Frances was recalled to Lyons. We do not know whether at her own request or not. Mother Saint John Bruyére, who replaced her, inherited all the difficulties but conformed to the teachings of its first Superiors and maintained the standard of studies.

Bishop de Thiollaz did not renounce his plan. "He had ambitioned from the beginning of his episcopate to establish a motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in his diocese, where they would teach." He counted on drawing the subjects from Evian to establish Annecy. Death surprised him on March 14, 1832, before the realization of this plan, so close to his heart.

"If God did not permit him to perfect this important undertaking," his historian tells us, "at least he has the merit of having planned it," and his will proves to us how much he had desired this establishment in his episcopal city. One finds the following in this will.

> "I have acquired from Madame Guillet, by contract of this day September 10, 1928, the portion of the Little Visitation that I destine by the present note for the Sisters of Saint Joseph, for the time when it will be favorable to introduce them either in this ancient convent or any other locality in Annecy.
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> "What I shall be able to buy thereafter, in the same locality, will be joined also to the part that I have already acquired, and will always form the property of the Sisters of Saint Joseph even though they be established in quite another part of Annecy which they will find more suitable." [2]

One cannot help being deeply moved at such paternal solicitude and one is not surprised to learn that the Superior of Evian experienced a deep sorrow at the announcement of his death. She venerated the august prelate whom God had just called to Himself, and yet she had to disagree with him.

The fear of again having a difference of opinion with the ideas of his successor caused her such anxiety in advance that she begged the Superior General to recall her to Lyons. Mother Saint John never remained deaf to the prayer of one of her children. She wrote to her dear daughter to come to her, reserving to herself to acquaint her, after prayer and examination, with her intentions with regard to her. On June 24, 1832, she went to Lyons. Upon her arrival at the Chartreux, with entire obedience she placed herself in the hands of her Superior.

[2] M. le Chanoine Albert: *Histoire de Mgr. C. F. de Thiollaz.*

Mother Saint John did not send this tired soul back to Evian. After a little rest, she again confided to her the charge of Superior, at Belleville-sur-Saône, in the Department of the Rhone. Some days later, Sister Aloysia, the assistant of Evian, received the order to direct the house temporarily. It was fitting to await the arrival of the new bishop before making a definite decision. This was Bishop Rey who was consecrated Bishop of Pignerol on May 24, 1824. The establishment of the Sisters of Saint Joseph was one of the first works realized by the Bishop in his Diocese of Pignerol.

Transferred, in 1832, from Pignerol to Annecy, Bishop Rey was delighted to find, in his new diocese, four communities of the Institute for which he had deep esteem and sympathy. Informed of the temporary conditions of Evian, he communicated with the motherhouse without delay, in order to obtain a Superior. Mother Saint John answered that, for the present, Sister Aloysia would remain in charge but there would be a Superior in the near future; but she did not send her. The reason was that in view of the creation of a motherhouse in Annecy, it was not wise to send a Sister whom she would be obliged to recall. Four novices had finished their time of trial. Sister Aloysia was authorized to admit them to religious profession. The ceremony took place on January 24, 1833. Let us note that one of these novices, Sister Louise Flavia Blanc, was later Superior General of Annecy.

Like his illustrious predecessor, Bishop Rey wished to have the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Annecy. Bishop de Thiollaz "died without having carried out his plan, hindered as he was by the decisions of his inflexible mind, by too much method and prudence. Bishop Rey, more confident in God and inclined to favor that desire which encouraged the children of the people to obtain an education more appropriate to the aspirations of modern times," made it succeed in all its wide scope. If, by temperament, Bishop de Thiollaz was especially prudent, Bishop Rey was confident as well as prudent. Certain that the works conducted by the Sisters of Saint Joseph would not harm those of the Nuns of the Visitation, he did not obtrude his program of studies; but money was lacking to begin the establishment he planned.

The same conditions existed when, on arriving in Pignerol, he brought the Sisters there. He had sold a pectoral cross and a ring enriched with diamonds, presents of King Charles Felix, to pay for the house which served as a school for his poor little girls, but he did not always have crosses and rings to sell. Fortunately one always has God Who never fails to help those who have confidence. Bishop Rey was a man of resources because he was a man of faith, and exerted himself. However, he was still human enough to wonder how he would succeed in bringing the Sisters of Saint Joseph to Annecy, when Divine Providence furnished him the means.

That year, 1833, a celebrated preacher of the Society of Jesus, Father MacCarthy, a personal friend of Bishop Rey, gave a course of sermons during Lent in the church of Saint Maurice. In order to follow the sermons of the eloquent orator, a stranger, under an assumed name, took a house at the gates of the city. She whom the people in Annecy called Madame de Larémont was in reality the Countess de la Rochejaquelein. On the abdication of Charles X, an attempted insurrection having broken out in Vendée, her husband, August de la Rochejaquelein, was suspected and had to seek safety in exile like the royal family of the Bourbons. He retired to Geneva and was condemned to die for contempt of court. The Assize Court of Versailles acquitted him two years later. The countess and her husband lived in Switzerland, under assumed names, until after the Revolution of 1848.

In Annecy, every time that the countess went to church, she was beset by a crowd of children who held out their hands, soliciting alms. Begging was, in Savoy, a trade for the children. In fact, this evil of society was found everywhere. The countess had seen it exercised to its full extent at Aix-les-Bains, in the days of the splendors of the Empire, and, like all the other illustrious personages who were there then she had witnessed the happy transformation brought about by the Sisters.

The countess used to say to herself that it was a pity to allow this youth, the hope of the future, to grow up thus in an atmosphere of vice, ignorance, idleness and abandonment. The fate of the girls especially inspired her with great anxiety. Tormented by this thought, she wrote to the Bishop whose name she did not know, telling him of her uneasiness, spoke to him of Aix-les-Bains, of the happy improvements verified by everybody and told him he could obtain the same results by using the same means. Her letter was accompanied by a rich offering which she begged him to use for the opening of a school for the poor little girls in Annecy, adding that the only condition she imposed was that the school be confided to the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

The Bishop's answer was not delayed. He went to the countess and, at the first interview, the foundation of the school was decided. His Lordship did not think it possible to appeal to Evian, as Lyons had not sent the Superior who had been requested. He appealed to Pignerol, which sent five Sisters. They arrived on May 7, 1833, Sister Josephine Rey, his niece, among them. When the Sisters arrived, there was not a suitable place to receive them. The Bishop gave them a wing of his residence. The countess paid for the furnishings and the school for the poor children opened on May 20. Almost at once it numbered three hundred pupils. The worthy prelate was pleased; and he was happy to visit these busy little people in whom he foresaw an entire generation of honest, well-instructed and virtuous mothers who would be capable of bringing up their children in the love of work and the practice of duty.

This school was the first step toward the realization of Bishop de Thiollaz' plan. Bishop Rey told the countess of his intention of resuming his predecessor's plan and of succeeding in it. The countess approved and promised her generous assistance. But the Bishop's palace was not sufficient for so important a work. They must find a house. The part of the monastery purchased and willed by Bishop de Thiollaz to the Sisters of Saint Joseph, created a desire for the complete purchase of what was called the "Little Visitation." Saint

Chantal and her daughters had lived there almost two hundred years and sanctified it by their prayers. The Sisters of Saint Joseph, who realized the first idea of Saint Francis de Sales, would be truly in their place in one of his monasteries.

Dreaming is one thing; realization of the dream is another. During the Revolution, this monastery had been sold as national property. In 1833, it belonged to twelve proprietors and had forty-five tenants. It would be a difficult task to induce all these people to give up their home, yet difficult does not mean impossible, especially when one has God on his side. They decided to buy the enclosure, the house and the chapel. While waiting, the Sisters and the school were housed under the Bishop‘s roof.

The good King Charles Albert, when visiting his Duchy of Savoy, remained at the Bishop's palace and heard the sound of the little bell that called the Sisters to prayers. "Whom have you upstairs, My Lord?" the monarch asked. The prelate acquainted him with the temporary installation and his plan for the future convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The king, charmed with this plan, gave the Bishop three thousand pounds to help in its accomplishment.

God was not less favorable than the king with the plan of Bishop Rey. He removed the principal obstacle by inspiring almost all of the proprietors and the tenants to consent, one after the other, either to sell or to move. So that from 1833 to 1837 a great part of the property was acquired. Conferences took place in which it was agreed by the Bishop of Annecy, the Archbishop of Lyons and the Superior General, that subjects would be received into the four convents of Evian, Mégève, Sallanches and Thorens; that these subjects, joined with the five Sisters from Pignerol, would found the Motherhouse of Annecy in the former monastery of the Visitandines, and that the four convents mentioned above would depend upon this motherhouse.

The Congregation of Saint Joseph of Annecy, so closely united with the Congregation of Saint Joseph of Lyons, was thus created. In 1834, the classes were transferred from the

Bishop's palace to the former monastery, and, in 1835, the Religious went there to live. The buildings in which so many saintly Religious had lived were kept as relics; but were made higher to accommodate the growing needs of the new occupants. Later (1855), to the "Little Visitation" they added "La Galerie," humble cradle of the Visitation Order.

"La Galerie" is a little house of modest appearance, with a garden on one side and an orchard on the other. The garden and the orchard were separated from the house by a road, but connected with it by a covered gallery, thrown, like a bridge, over the road. Saint Francis de Sales, who did not know where to lodge his daughters, was so happy when he was able to buy this house that he wrote, after the contract was signed: "Never was I happier than now. I have found a hive for my poor bees, or rather a cage for my little doves." [3]

On June 6, 1610, the Bishop of Geneva led to "La Galerie" Madame de Chantal, Mademoiselle Marie Jacqueline Favre and Mademoiselle de Bréchard with Anne Jacqueline Coste, first out-Sister of the Visitation. It was in the little chapel, which one visits today with so much respect, that he gave them the veil and received their vows. It was in this garden that the pious Bishop gave the Sisters the conferences published under the name of "Entertainments." It was in these paths that he walked with the saintly Foundress, working out the observances of the Order. Everywhere in "La Galérie" are memories and relics.

The Sisters of the Visitation lived there only two years. "La Galerie" having become too small, they built a first monastery, which the saint and her Religious entered on October 30, 1612. As this monastery was not large enough, a second one was built on the border of the lake and quite near "La Galerie." They called this second monastery "The Little Visitation." Situated opposite the first, it was united with it in heart, and the bell of the "Large Visitation" always regulated the bell of the "Little One." The Revolution closed both monasteries.

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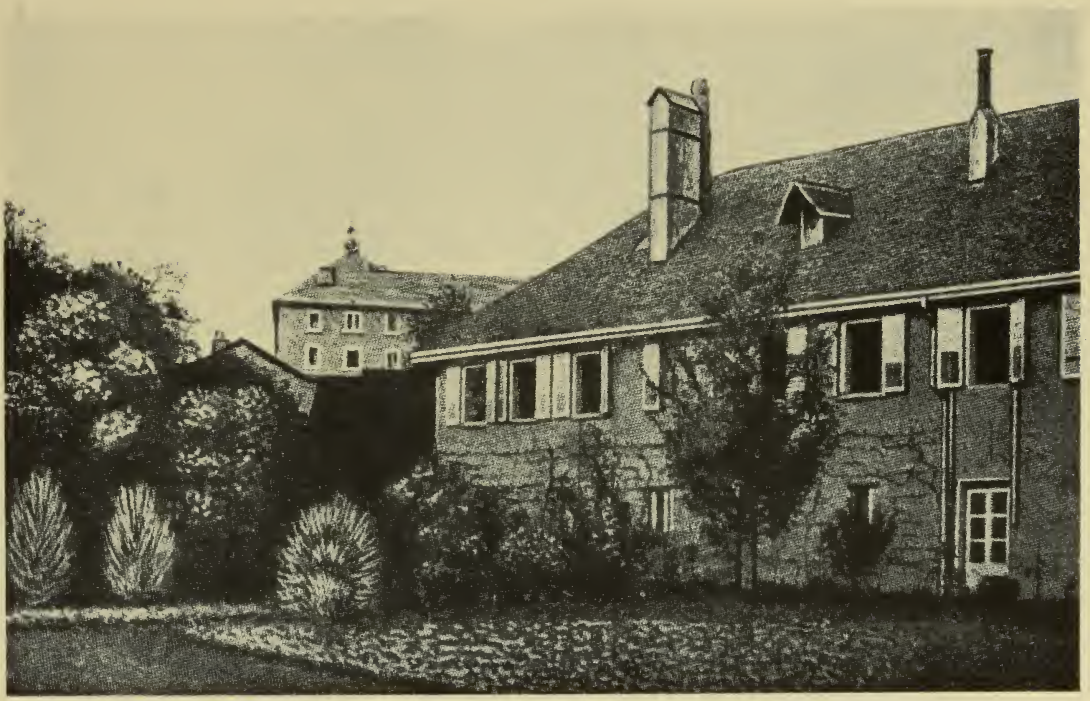
[3] M. l'Abbé Bougaud: *Histoire de Sainte Chantal,* I, 424.



LA GALERIE

ANNECY, FRANCE

Once peace was established, it seemed as though Saint Francis de Sales, second patron of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, who had realized his original ideas, made them a gift of the cradle of his order and one of his monasteries, to show to all how agreeable to him are the bonds of charity which unite these two great religious families.

The Congregation of Annecy made several foundations notably in India and in England. In response to the pressing request of Monsignor Neyrat, a Missionary of Saint Francis de Sales and first Vicar Apostolic of Vizagapatam, Hindustan, the Congregation of Saint Joseph of Annecy decided to take its share in the missionary work in India. Four Sisters embarked at Bordeaux on June 30, 1849. They landed at Yanaon after a voyage of six months, and founded there their first establishment. Two years later, the arrival of six Sisters made it possible to advance farther and to make a foundation at Vizagapatam, where they now have charge of the Government Hospital. The Provincial House is situated at Waltair. They have a boarding-school, a day-school and an orphanage. They also have a house of protection for young widows, to whom they teach the making of lace and other crafts. They have two novitiates, one for Europeans and the other for natives. The latter are incorporated into the Institute and aid in the conversion of their infidel countrymen.[4]

"In English India, in Maduras, the Sisters of Saint Joseph from Lyons also have a novitiate for native Sisters. They send them to pagan villages which have no resident missionaries. There, they teach catechism and baptize children who are in danger of death. In the year 1928, these native Sisters baptized 1,844 little pagans."[5]

At Cocanada and Cuttack, the Sisters have charge of hospitals. They have schools and orphanages at Vizianagram, Surada and Palconda. In all places they assist the clergy in the work of the apostolate among the pagans, and, at stated times each year, the Sisters visit the neighboring villages and baptize (*in articulo mortis*) annually, thousands of children. In the years 1931 and 1932, they baptized, each year, upwards of six thousand. The Indian Mission was blessed and encouraged by Pope Pius IX.

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[4] *Sisters of Saint Joseph of Annecy,* English translation.

[5] Author's note.

Several years later, a young English officer, Captain Dewell, who had, through the good influence of a Missionary of Saint Francis de Sales, become a convert to the Catholic Faith, decided to bring missionaries to England. He formed the resolution to establish at Malmesbury, in Wiltshire, his native county, a center of Catholicism to aid in the conversion of England. At present, this town has a beautiful new elementary school taught by the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

The Missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales and the Sisters of Saint Joseph whom he had seen at work in the town of Nagpore, North India, where his battalion was stationed, seemed to him most suitable for the pious plan he had conceived. Proposals were made to the Superiors of these congregations, as well as to the Bishop of Clifton. Bishop Clifford, being equally desirous of having the Sisters of Saint Joseph, went twice to Annecy to negotiate for the foundation. It was due to Mother Louise Flavia that the arrangements were happily concluded. On August 21, 1864, three Sisters took possession of the small convent that had been prepared for them at Devizes. At that time, the Catholic population was very small; the Sisters now have a flourishing school.

Ten years later, 1874, the novitiate, begun at Devizes, was transferred to Newport, Monmouthshire, where the Provincial House of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Annecy is situated. Here reside the Provincial and a community of about sixty members, including novices and postulants. At the convent in Newport, the Sisters conduct boarding- and day-schools. The Secondary School is approved by the Board of Education. The staff in the latter school consists chiefly of Sisters with University degrees. Besides the schools at the convent, the Sisters teach in three large Government elementary schools which have excellent reports from His Majesty's inspectors. At Chatham the Sisters conduct a High School for girls. At Bristol, Taunton, and Downham (Kent) and at Cardiff (Wales), the Sisters have charge of Government Schools. There is also a convent of the Institute at Grove Park, London. At Aberdeen, Scotland, the Sisters are employed in managing the domestic affairs of Blair's College for clerical students. The Sisters have just undertaken similar work at the Irish College in Paris. In all these places the Sisters visit the sick and poor in hospitals, and in their homes. They instruct converts to the Faith; they direct sodalities and assist the clergy in all works of charity and zeal.[6]

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[6] *Sisters of Saint Joseph of Annecy,* English translation.

CHAPTER XXVII

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

UNIFORMITY now prevailed in the congregation. What had been known as "Communities of Saint Joseph" had developed into a centralized body, known as the "Congregation of Saint Joseph." Under the guidance and direction of Mother Saint John, without pomp, noise or pretension, was formed one of the largest religious families which rejoice, honor and fertilize the Church. All that God's chosen one did was great, judicious and intelligent. Everything was accomplished simply, in the spirit of Saint Joseph, which Mother Saint John possessed in the highest degree. With the coöperation of, and depending upon the Archbishop of Lyons, the Superior General directed the spiritual and temporal affairs of the entire congregation aided by an assistant and counsellors.

Happy at the growth of her spiritual family and with its fruitfulness, Mother Saint John thanked God from the fullness of her heart. It seemed, indeed, that now her task was finished; but, before laying aside the heavy burden which God had placed upon her, Mother Saint John was to accomplish a very splendid work and to accept a very great sacrifice. The work was the foundation of the missions of the United States and Canada; the sacrifice—the gift of three persons very dear to her, destined by God to be the pioneers in the establishing of these missions.

When the French came to the unknown lands of America, they brought with them their religion and their language. They were free to build churches, rectories, hospitals and schools. They were to bear the expense and it was no small task. To maintain their Catholic works on an equal footing with Protestant ones, was the perpetual anxiety of the priests and bishops. It was also their duty to provide priests, for there were, as yet, no seminaries; and vocations to the priesthood were rare.

About 1834, Bishop Rosati, the first Bishop of Saint Louis, was in double perplexity. He had neither money nor priests. To obtain both, he wrote to Father Charles Cholleton, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Lyons, hoping, through his agency, to obtain help from the original work which a Lyonnaise, Mademoiselle Pauline Jaricot, of the parish of Saint Polycarp, had just founded in that city. The work of distant missions had appealed to this virtuous Christian and she interested the young working-girls in it. Every Saturday, Mademoiselle Jaricot asked them for an alms of one cent for the missions. It was from this humble beginning that the Society for the Propagation of the Faith developed,—a work solemnly approved in 1813 by Pius VII. Bishop Rosati came to it as a petitioner through the mediation of the Vicar General. Father Cholleton answered the prelate:

"It is in quality of your vicar that I presented myself to the Society of the Propagation of the Faith and that I hope to obtain abundant help. I do not doubt that Archbishop de Pins will also send you priests." He might have added that the Superior General of the Sisters of Saint Joseph would find Religious for the schools. Father Cholleton did not then know that someone was thinking of endowing America with communities of that congregation. This person was the Countess de la Rochejaquelein.

Even at that time, the "Annals" of the Propagation of the Faith gave an account to the associates of the use of the sums received, of the progress of the work and the requests made. The reading of the "Annals" had revealed to the countess the great poverty of the mission of the Mississippi. Her heart was touched and at once she thought of the Sisters of Saint Joseph to convert and teach the Indians. She felt that Religious are indispensable wherever missionary labors are to be performed. There are so many works created around a mission which the Sisters alone can efficiently accomplish. After obtaining the promise from Mother Saint John that she would give the Sisters for America, if His Lordship desired them, Madame de la Rochejaquelein asked Father Odin to propose them in her name, saying that she would defray the expenses of the first foundation.

The Bishop of Saint Louis saw at once the increase of burdens which would result from the opening of schools, and delayed his answer. The countess herself wrote to him:

"I think the excellent Father Odin and the Vicar General of Lyons have written to you several times on the subject of the desire I have to send Sisters of Saint Joseph to America. Your silence on this subject proves, either that the letters did not reach you, or that you are not anxious for this establishment. If, indeed, you have any objections to it, I wonder what they may be. It is not a vague idea to do a good work in America, which has made me propose them to you. Protected by Divine Providence, in a singular manner, in all the difficulties and misfortunes to which I have been exposed, I promised God, in so far as He would deign to bless this design, to send six Sisters of Saint Joseph to North America to convert the savages, to teach their children and those of Protestant families, and to convert also those to whom the missionaries, too busy or too few, are able to make but passing visits. The reading of the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith made me shed tears over these harvests for which there are no laborers.

"These incomparable Sisters, once established, could be sent two by two into the little villages, and there prepare the way for Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation. A settlement near the Indian territories, built on a rather wide plan, could be, after a short time, of the greatest advantage.

"My Lord, perhaps you do not know the Sisters of Saint Joseph. They follow the Rule of Saint Augustine,[1] and make perpetual vows. Their Rule obliges them to all the virtues of the cloister, joined to those which exact an ardent charity for their fellow-beings. It was the first thought of Saint Francis de Sales; one which he renounced, with sorrow, for his Visitation. Thus piety, interior recollection, self-denial, humility and prayer on the one hand; and on the other a devotion, without restriction, to all works of charity.

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[1] The Sisters of Saint Joseph follow the Rule of Saint Ignatius, but this rule has for its basis one of the four ancient rules recognized by the Church, that of Saint Augustine. The other rules are: The Rules of Saint Basil, Saint Benedict and Saint Francis of Assisi.

"If you had seen, as I, their spirit of poverty and humility. It is evangelical. I have known them for thirteen years. I have established several convents and contributed to the establishment of others. The East of France is alive with the activity of these Sisters. I have sent them to the West. They are not numerous enough for the demands. I have interested Father Cholleton, who would have chosen excellent subjects. Father Bochard sent them wherever they were requested, saying to them: 'Go quickly.' I know a foundation which began in a stable and with only six cents. God was there. From the example of the Crib, this establishment prospered, as well as others begun in a like manner.

"My Lord, the spirit of the Congregation of Saint Joseph is something without precedent. It is this poverty and this lowliness which Our Lord taught, and which conquers the world. It seems to me that if I succeed in establishing the Sisters of Saint Joseph in your America, near the savages, and near so many heretics in your diocese, I shall have done, during my life, something pleasing to God to win His mercy for my sins. I know that what I have given is not enough, but I will give more. I will help; only say, My Lord, what you think is necessary for the beginning.

"I pray you to answer as soon as possible. I am anxious that the work be accomplished. Be persuaded that I am altogether unwilling to impose my views on you as to the place and the best means to be taken to accomplish this end. Do what you think best. I have but one desire, namely, that they be not far from the territory of the savages and that they work for the conversion of poor Indians and poor Protestants; in fine, for all unhappy sects. I have an idea which I submit to you;—that all the merits of the Religious who will live in your establishments be consecrated to the souls of our erring brothers, no matter of what sect,—who, unknown to the world, have, at the moment of death, submitted their minds and hearts to God and to truth; and have promised, if they lived, to seek it with all their hearts by this final act, which says in one form or another, 'My Lord, I believe all that you want me to believe.' Do you not think, indeed that this endowment of prayers and merits is in the spirit of the great love of Our Lord for the salvation of souls, and at the same time a great consolation for Protestants? The thought of being eternally separated from their relatives, friends and neighbors hold back a great number who are drawn toward Catholicism.

"I am imposing on your time which is so valuable. Permit me to ask you to remember me to Madame Henrietta Kersaint, my cousin, a Religious of the Sacred Heart in Saint Louis. I ask her prayers and yours particularly, while begging you to accept my sentiments of respectful consideration and devotion in Our Lord.

"I have the honor of being your very humble and very obedient servant,

"Félicité de Duras, Countess de la Rochejaquelein
"Chambéry, June 10, 1835."

This letter, given later by the Archbishop of Saint Louis to the Sisters of Saint Joseph, makes us better acquainted with the noble soul of her who wrote it. It explains while, at the same time, it justifies the devotion vowed by the Institute to the memory of her who loved the Sisters of Saint Joseph, who had so much confidence in their ability and virtue, and whom she had so powerfully helped by her many liberalities. What has she not done, not only for the communities of Lyons and America, but for those of Chambéry, Annecy, Denmark and England?

She was a true Christian, a saintly soul, and, I might say a perfect Religious, for she belonged to the Third Order of Saint Francis. During the last thirty years of her life she received Holy Communion almost every day. Every day, too, she had spiritual reading, said her rosary and recited the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. During her free time she worked for the poor, to whom she gave all that was not absolutely necessary for her own maintenance. After the Revolution of 1830, and the abdication of Charles X, which had obliged her to take refuge in Switzerland a second time, she was permitted to return to France, where she retired to her castle of Ussé, near which the Sisters had their convent.

Bishop Rosati appreciated the author of this letter which he answered without delay. His Lordship accepted the offer and even asked that, to the six Sisters proposed, they send two more, specially trained to teach the deaf and dumb. In the meantime, Mother Saint John was preparing her daughters for the uncertain mission that might be confided to them. Instructions and counsels were given to these souls destined for this special apostolate. She reminded them that they would often be without spiritual help, when circumstances required it. The priest, obliged to traverse long distances in the vast forests to carry the consolations of religion to the sick and the dying, would not always be with them in the morning to give them the Eucharistic Bread. It might happen that sometimes he would not be present on Sunday to celebrate Mass. In these days of spiritual poverty they will have to remember that they carry their temple within them and that God has more than one way of giving Himself to souls. In these days, also, when all will seem to be lacking to nourish, enlighten and console them, they must remember that grace is never wanting, and that they have all the necessary means of sanctification in the actual state of things. Deprived of all exterior help, they can, by means of interior assistance, increase in themselves the life of God which will sanctify them and make their own lives fruitful.

Bishop Rosati's answer settled all doubt and the Sisters of Saint Joseph accepted the invitation to the American missions. As Mother Saint John did not wish to impose this exile on anybody, she made an appeal to her daughters, recommending them to pray, to consult their director, to weigh the matter well and, after that, to follow Divine inspiration. Divine inspiration grouped a goodly number. When the Sisters came to offer themselves to the Superior General, the latter saw, foremost among them, her two nieces, Sister Febronia and Sister Marie Delphine Fontbonne, daughters of her only brother, Claude Fontbonne. This sight afflicted the heart of the venerable Superior, but she generously accepted the sacrifice.

From this numerous group, seven were chosen. Six were to leave within a short time, Sisters Febronia and Delphine Fontbonne, Sister Febronia Chapellon, Sister Saint Protais Déboille, Sister Philomene Vilaine and Sister Marguerite Bouté. The Christian name of the countess was added to that of the last. She was thenceforth called Sister Félicité. The seventh, Sister Celestine Pommerel and Julie Fournier, a postulant, began at once to study the language of the deaf-mutes and would depart for America when they were capable of teaching it.

Archbishop de Pins asked for volunteers. From them, he chose a priest and two seminarians, as the needs of the diocese would not permit greater sacrifices. The priest chosen was Father James Fontbonne, Mother Saint John's nephew. The immolation was complete.

At the motherhouse, everybody was edified at the sacrifice and the simple, sublime manner with which it was made. One of the Sisters inspired by the circumstances, dramatized the biblical scene of the father preparing to sacrifice his son. Abraham's sacrifice was represented in the novitiate a few days before the departure. The allusion was too striking not to bring tears; they flowed abundantly, but hearts were comforted by them.

All was ready. Father Cholleton appointed Sister Febronia Fontbonne Superior of the little colony. Through delicacy and fear of acting from natural inclination, Mother Saint John did not wish to make the choice. She even felt sorrow in signing the new Superior's letter of obedience. Since the Vicar General had decided and regulated everything, the virtuous aunt gave the niece, whom she cherished, counsels full of wisdom and affection.

The departure was fixed for January 4, 1836. On the eve of this day, the six chosen ones said goodby to the assembled community. There was a scene of touching humility in this last reunion. The six missionaries casting themselves at the feet of their Sisters begged them to bless them and to pardon them for the trouble they had caused them and for any bad example which they had given. With great overflowing of heart, Mother Saint John blessed the six valiant missionaries and the Sisters whom they were about to leave.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LEAST OF ALL SEEDS

ON January 4, 1836, the day set for the departure of the missionaries to Missouri, Mother Saint John and her six valiant daughters left the Chartreux at daybreak to go to Fourvière. Father Fontbonne, appointed director and spiritual father of the pious caravan by Father Cholleton, celebrated Mass with great fervor. Mother Saint John, her nephew, her nieces and her other daughters renewed their sacrifice and consecrated themselves and their mission to the Blessed Virgin.

On the other side of the Saône, near the church of Saint Nizier, was the General Dispensary, later transferred to a site near the prefect's house. The Sisters of Saint Joseph had and still have the direction of this establishment. The little colony went there for a modest breakfast. A priest, informed of the presence of the Superior General, asked for a moment's conversation. Mother Saint John received him in the parlor, and while they were talking, our missionaries heard the bell for their departure. Deeming it useless to increase the emotion of this sad and solemn moment, the Sisters left without disturbing the Superior, thus making a sacrifice of the last adieu. God alone knows what this sacrifice cost the hearts of Mother and daughters.

Our missionaries had to wait eleven days at Havre for the departure of the boat. They were received hospitably at the home of Madame Dodard, a pious widow who devoted her fortune to the missions and considered it a joy and honor to give shelter to bishops, priests and Religious who were going to bring the name of God to distant lands. The *Heidelberg* left Havre on January 17. It took the *Heidelberg,* only a sailing vessel, forty-nine days to cross the ocean. This long and perilous journey was painful. Let us note a slight incident, which shows the spirit of sacrifice with which each one was animated. One day, the little community was assembled on the deck. One of the Sisters, pressing lovingly to her heart an old book of devotions, said: "I could not live without this book."

"You could not live without this book?" the young Superior said in a tone of sweet reproach. She took the book and threw it into the ocean. There was a slight shudder around her, but the owner, thus deprived of her book, showed neither vexation nor surprise. Father Fontbonne said nothing, but they say that he replaced the book later. In any case, the lesson was not lost on the young Sister, who, after breaking all ties of family and country, still remained attached to the yellow pages of an old book.

During the entire crossing, the captain, who was extremely kind to the travelers, showed great sympathy for the Lyonnais group and became quite interested in the mission they were to establish. Nevertheless, our missionaries passed through terrible anguish. One of the seminarians, John Escoffier, recommended to the Bishop of Saint Louis for his piety, talents and strong character, became dangerously ill. Two American doctors were on board the vessel. The Sisters began, under their direction, their duties as infirmarians. Anxiety was great, but thank God care triumphed over the malady. Yet the mission did not have the happiness of keeping this valuable subject long. He died quite young.

Scarcely had the caravan recovered from this incident, when it was to meet another. Near the Gulf of Mexico, the ship was overtaken by a terrible tempest which threatened them with shipwreck. The terror of the passengers became frenzy during the long hours of the storm. On this occasion, Father Fontbonne was the consoling angel. He sustained their courage, preached calmness, confidence and resignation and brought peace to these frightened people. Thank God, the *Heidelberg* weathered the storm. On March 5, it cast anchor at New Orleans. Father Moni, rector of the cathedral, awaited them on the wharf. He told them that Bishop Rosati was in New Orleans and would receive them the next day. He took the

Sisters to the Monastery of the Ursulines, who received them most cordially. Father Fontbonne and the seminarians went to the rectory.

That evening, in order to thank Mary who had saved them and to recommend to her all travelers in peril, Mother Febronia promised to add the hymn *Ave Maris Stella* to the night prayers.[1] The next day, His Lordship welcomed his new family in a fatherly manner. The Sisters gave him the letters sent by Archbishop de Pins and the Countess de la Rochejaquelein. These letters, as previously stated, are kept in the archives of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet. After recommending the Sisters to the Bishop of Saint Louis, Archbishop de Pins added: "They will be excellent catechists, good infirmarians, perfect sacristans and zealous instructors. Their services can but marvelously advance the work of God in your diocese."

The countess wrote:

> "It is with greatest happiness that I write this letter which will be given to you by our dear Sisters whom you deign to receive among your flock. They are happy, I think, at the idea of suffering privations for Jesus Christ. I cannot say how I have been touched by their dispositions. I am confident that they bring to America the true and admirable spirit of their congregation, and that the grain of mustard seed which is to be sown in Saint Louis under your protection will become a large tree. My hope is that with time, the fruits of the establishment of these good Sisters in America will be immense and that they will comprise all works, which charity may suggest. I am most anxious to be informed exactly of our humble beginnings and I shall aid them to the best of my ability, whenever it will be necessary."

After the reading of these letters and a little fatherly conversation, the Bishop decided that the Sisters remain for a few days in New Orleans, and then proceed to Saint Louis. On March 15, at noon, the pious band of missionaries with Bishop

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[1] This custom was preserved in the Saint Louis convents until 1908. At that time, Pius X had the hymn eliminated since it was not mentioned in the constitutions.

Rosati and Father Timon, afterwards Bishop of Buffalo, left New Orleans. The boat which took ten days to ascend the Mississippi, reached Saint Louis at six o'clock in the evening of March 25.

Canadian families that formed the majority of the population were grouped around this Catholic center. Other families from Canada, also of French origin, were scattered among the Indian tribes whose ancestors, one hundred fifty years before, had been brought into contact with Christian civilization by the French missionaries and explorers. "The sons of Saint Ignatius and the priests from Quebec had planted there the Faith which had remained alive at the price of much suffering and labor."

When the Sisters arrived in Saint Louis in 1836 they found only a straggling village, formed of wooden huts, built at the junction of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. This village, which was quickly to become very important, had a hospital directed by the Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul. It was in this hospital that the Sisters were received in a most kindly manner. Some of them remained there several months.

It was Bishop Rosati's intention that the first home of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in his diocese would be in Carondelet; [2] but three miles from Saint Louis was Cahokia whose first pastor, Father d'Outreligne, so ardently desired the Sisters to teach the children of his parish that the Bishop resolved to give him some without delay. For two years, the worthy priest lived only on corn-bread in order to found this establishment. Deeply touched by the zeal of this fervent apostle, the Bishop did not wish to make him wait any longer for the desired assistance. His Lordship decided that Sister Delphine, Sister Félicité and Sister Philomene would remain in Saint Louis to study the English lauguage and that Mother Febronia Fontbonne, Sister Febronia Chapellon and Sister Saint Protais would go at once to Cahokia where he would install them.

In Cahokia, in 1699, Father Peter Francis Pinet, S.J., had founded an Indian mission. This mission prospered until

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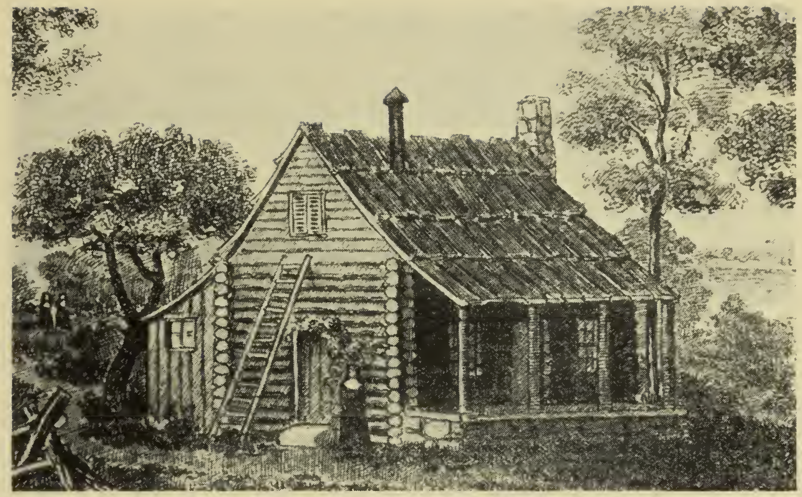
[2] See: *The Congregation of Saint Joseph of Carondelet.* Sister Lucida Savage.



THE FIRST CONVENT IN THE UNITED STATES OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH
CARONDELET SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI, 1836

MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CONVENT AND COLLEGE
CHESTNUT HILL, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

1783, when the church was destroyed by fire. The mission, thereupon, began to decline for want of a meeting-place. At the time of the arrival of the Sisters, the church had been rebuilt and Father d'Outreligne of the Congregation of the Missions had been its pastor for more than five years. The parishioners, mainly Canadians, counted among them descendants of the first colonists who belonged to the French nobility. Mingled with the Canadian population were also the descendants of the Indians, still wearing moccasins, and clothed with the skins of deer and other wild beasts.

This Catholic population, to the number of several hundreds, consisted of simple and pious men, who were proud of their "beautiful way of speaking French" and their Christian traditions that they piously preserved. One of these traditional customs was that on the great feasts, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and the Assumption, the priest blessed a quantity of small breads prepared in a special way. These were piled up on decorated tables, placed before the Communion table and distributed to the people after High Mass. They were, in short, blessed bread, but blessed with a solemnity which made it an event. This ceremony was also repeated before the annual expedition of the traders, who went in search of furs in the Rocky Mountains.

On April 7, at nine o'clock in the morning, Bishop Rosati, Father Fontbonne and the three Sisters took the boat from Saint Louis to Cahokia, where they were received as angels from Heaven. Father d'Outreligne, accompanied by his parishioners, waited on the banks of the Mississippi. The villagers had come on foot, on horseback, in carriages and in carts to receive their Sisters and to take them to their convent. It was noon when they entered the church of Cahokia, where they were awaited by the Master, or rather the Friend, for whom they had left all. They went, then, to the little dwelling destined for them. A meal was served in a passageway that took the place of a refectory. The notes mention the corn-bread which must have seemed rather strange to their French palates.

Upon their arrival the Sisters named their establishment

"Institute of Saint Joseph," but to the French Canadians it was always the "Abbey." The schools opened at once and counted both day pupils and boarders. Father d'Outreligne felt an intense joy. As his dream was accomplished, he took his devotion and zeal elsewhere, leaving to his successor, Father Matthew Condamine, the benefit of his sacrifices.

Father Condamine was young, virtuous and energetic. His apostolate promised beautiful fruits. Scarcely had two months passed when he contracted a malignant fever, against which all efforts were in vain. Father d'Outreligne passed through Cahokia during one of his apostolic journeys. Learning of the illness of his successor he went to him and never left him. Father Condamine died on August 8. Bishop Rosati, deeply affected, presided at his funeral, which was not attended by the Sisters of Saint Joseph as they, too, were stricken by the fever. Sister Saint Protais was so seriously ill that Bishop Rosati resolved to remove her from this unhealthful climate.

A second house was opened at Carondelet by the Sisters who had remained in Saint Louis to study English. Sister Delphine was the Superior. Unlike Cahokia, which is in low land, Carondelet is situated on high ground, inaccessible to floods; and the air is pure and healthful. In the fall, His Lordship sent Sister Saint Protais to Carondelet and Sister Philomene replaced her in Cahokia. At that time Carondelet was but a collection of huts inhabited by poor Creole wood-cutters. After cutting down the trees, they tied the branches into bundles, sold them in Saint Louis and then returned to clear the land, which they divided into fields or gardens.

Father Saulnier, missionary pastor of Carondelet, received the Sisters on their arrival and shared with them his evening meal of corn-bread and cheese on a bare table. The meal finished, the priest took his guests to the convent and school, taking care to warn them that he was too poor to help them and that they must get along alone. This apparent rudeness hid an excellent heart. He often deprived himself of bread to bring it to the Sisters. He was happy when, by means of saving, he was able to buy them a cow and thus to procure some milk for them.

Father Saulnier gave them a gift of two wooden huts that belonged to him, one for the convent and the other for the school. A stool, two empty mattress covers, a table and a few chairs composed all the furniture. Bedclothes and sheets brought from France completed the furnishing of the house. The same room served several purposes. The Sisters spread out the beds in the evening and took them away in the morning. The winter was severe. The badly joined planks only half protected them from the rain and the snow, but the greatest suffering came from the people. They were very different from the inhabitants of Cahokia who cherished their "Abbey." Those of Carondelet had taste neither for study nor religion. The task of the missionaries was thankless. "And yet, we were happy," Sister Saint Protais wrote later, "and God did not leave us without consolation."

Father Fontbonne, whom His Lordship had kept in Saint Louis for the service of the cathedral, was worried. He loved his sister tenderly and he suffered on seeing her and her daughters in such destitution. He sold the vestments he had brought from France to help them, and as often as he could, he went to Carondelet to visit them.

One day the Bishop arrived unexpectedly. The prelate brought each of the Sisters a cloak of very warm cloth. He had them made from the model of those worn by the Sisters in Saint Louis. "Let me see if they fit you," the good Bishop said. "I had them made especially for the morning, when you go to hear Mass in your cold church."

They had to try on the mantles in his presence. He excused himself for not coming oftener. "I have not wherewith to buy a horse, and the roads are so bad." It is easy to understand that their hearts were sensitive to such tender solicitude. This paternal kindness warmed them better than the mantles, however greatly appreciated.

In Lyons, the missions were not forgotten. Mother Saint John sent money as soon as she could. The countess, too, was busy with the houses she had helped to establish. Madame de la Rochejaquelein had sold some jewels to pay for the journey of the six Sisters. She had sold some more to help the installation; but it takes a long time for money to cross the ocean. Beginnings are always painful. The Sisters did not complain, as we have said. They offered their sufferings, great and small, for souls.

Here below, even winter and its hardships have an end. In spring, Mother Delphine went to visit her sister. The archives tell us neither of the pleasure of this visit nor its duration; but they do tell us that the day Mother Delphine left Cahokia to go back to Carondelet, Mother Febronia accompanied her some distance, and that, on her return, she lost her way in the forest. When night came the Mother had not returned, and the Sisters were troubled and showed their anxiety. The neighbors whom they aroused were excited. They rang the alarm bell and the entire population was soon gathered in the square.

"My friends," one of the principal men of the village said, "our good Sisters from France are in great affliction. Their Superior is lost in the great forest of La Pointe; we must find her at any cost. Take your torches to guide you in the darkness, and your guns in case of any dangerous encounter. Divide into parties of ten or twelve and scour the woods in every direction. From time to time cry aloud: 'Mother of Cahokia, do not be afraid. Your children are seeking you.' "

The orders were executed as soon as given and the forest was searched in all its depths. Mother Febronia, after following a number of little bypaths that led her astray, tired, worn-out and at the end of her strength took refuge in the trunk of an old tree. She recommended herself to God and offered Him feeble groans for prayers as she hoped for no help. One of the group of these good Canadians heard the groans and ran to the place whence the sound came. The good Mother was found in an inextricable ravine. At once, the trumpet was sounded and the men joyfully gathered from all quarters. In a few minutes branches torn from the trees made an improvised stretcher. Each one wanted to carry the pious burden on his shoulders, but one of the old men said: "She is frozen from cold and fear. She must walk to bring back warmth and life. We will support her and, if necessary from time to time, even carry her in our arms. Let her walk, otherwise sickness will come." The advice was followed. Thus the good Mother was returned to her distressed Sisters.

At times as close as possible to one another, warm rays of the sun, piercing the Lyonnais fogs, were directed to America. The letters from the Chartreux addressed to Cahokia or to Carondelet were indeed rays of sunshine. Once, one of these letters announced to both communities, the reception of Mademoiselle Fournier, to whom Mother Saint John had given her own name, to recall to her dear missionaries that she did not forget them. The young novice was to leave with Sister Celestine Pommerel and both would soon join them. There was a great feast in the two convents the day this news arrived. It was the beginning of 1837, when, calculating according to their own voyage, the Sisters remarked that surely the two Sisters would be with them before the end of May. It was not so. May passed, then June, July and August. No Sisters and no news,—only a letter from Lyons stating that the travelers had embarked at Brest, on the frigate *Hermione* which had on board six hundred soldiers and forty officers. At Cahokia, at Carondelet and at Saint Louis everybody was very anxious, and, without daring to voice their fears, they believed that the travelers were lost at sea.

On September 4, the two Sisters disembarked at Saint Louis and presented themselves at the episcopal residence, stating their names. His Lordship, agreeably surprised, received them at once. The Sisters had resumed the secular dress, therefore there was nothing to prove that they were Sisters. He invited them to converse together in signs to assure himself of their identity. The Sisters, who were suffering from hunger and fatigue, would have preferred to put that off until later. They had to submit however. Sister Celestine asked Sister Saint John in the language of the deaf and dumb: "Of what are you thinking, Sister?"

"I am thinking of the good bread we ate in France and which I need so much at this moment."

At this unexpected answer, Sister Celestine lost her gravity. The Bishop, seeing her laugh, asked the reason. Sister Celestine repeated her companion's answer. At once, the good Bishop crossed the room, opened a closet, took food and obliged the Sisters to eat. Their hunger ended the examination.

Father Cholleton had given a letter to the Sisters for the Bishop:

> "It is a great consolation for me to present to your Lordship the two Sisters for whom you asked last year. The first, Sister Celestine, twenty-three years old, is professed. The second, Sister Saint John, a novice, is twenty-two years old. She will esteem herself very happy to make her profession into your hands when you find her sufficiently prepared. Both are animated with the best dispositions, are capable of assisting your plans and of bringing your work to a good end.
>
> "Madame de la Rochejaquelein has given them three thousand francs. If you wish to thank her, her address is: Lausanne, Switzerland."

After narrating their voyage to the Bishop, it was decided that the Sisters would remain some days in Saint Louis; and then, Doctor Rodié, a Catholic native of San Domingo, would lend his carriage, and Black Margaret would take them to their convent. Black Margaret was the doctor's colored servant. She spoke excellent French and, on the way, entertained the Sisters with the history of Saint Louis and its surroundings. She told them that Carondelet was originally called Prairie à Catalan, the name of the one who first occupied it; then it was called Louisburg; and finally, in 1796, Carondelet, the name of the last Spanish governor of Louisiana. The inhabitants of this country were called, jokingly, Vide Poche (Empty Pocket); while the trappers named Saint Louis, Paincourt (Short-of-Bread) because the inhabitants were not rich.

The travelers arrived at Carondelet during the evening recreation. As the Sisters had not been notified, there was great surprise and still greater joy at seeing again, in the flesh, those whom they had no longer expected to see. Astonishment reached its height, when the Sisters learned that the newcomers were better informed than they about the history of the country and the past and present conditions of the village.

The Sisters had been three months on sea, never suspecting the anxiety they caused on both sides of the ocean. They jotted down, day by day, their experiences on the water. Their diary runs as follows:

> "First, we had to stop at Brest and then at Martinique. We put into port for five days at Fort Royal (now Fort-de-France); we had another delay of seventeen days at Havana, where we had to wait for the boat of the French consul, which was to transport us to New Orleans. It was the end of July when the boat cast anchor in Havana. Since yellow fever was raging in the city, the commander, who was a real father to us, would not allow us to take up our residence there. During these seventeen days, the frigate was our *home.*
>
> "We lived there in the midst of the soldiers and officers, receiving the respect of all, as we had during the entire crossing. Every morning, the commander had us accompanied to Mass by two officers in uniform. In the evening, at five o'clock, he took us to the consul's or to the home of some French friend. He brought us back at about ten o'clock.
>
> "These visits and prolonged evenings do not enter into the program of the life of a Religious. As it was scarcely possible to shelter us in Havana, the commander judged this hygienic prudence necessary. 'To protect you from the disease,' he said, 'I must not permit you to live in an infected city or to pine away on a boat.'
>
> "We left Havana after seventeen days of this régime. The fever was raging in New Orleans also. In order not to expose us to the danger, the very next day, the Vicar General accompanied us to the boat which brought us to Saint Louis, without our being able to notify anybody."

After this narrative the *Te Deum* and the *Magnificat* burst from all hearts. Sister Celestine gave Mother Delphine a letter from Father Cholleton:

"You will be pleased at my promptness in sending you these two zealous and well-instructed aids, so capable of helping you. A great number, perhaps two thirds of your community, were most willing to share the glory and labors of your mission; but I have not found another Countess de la Rochejaquelein, who wishes to assume the expense of the voyage and the first establishment. Sister Saint John is a novice. The Bishop will receive her vows when you find her sufficiently instructed in her religious duties. Follow the same plan, in the future, for the admission of the subjects whom it shall please Divine Providence to send you. Our very dear Sisters will give you all the news capable of interesting you personally.

"Charles Cholleton."

"April 5, 1873, Lyons"

At once the large trunks from Lyons were opened. They found clothes for the Sisters and the orphans, and beautiful things for the chapel which, until then, existed only in a dream. Then everybody felt that the great heart of Reverend Mother Saint John was beating quite near theirs, and that the power of her love threw a bridge over the ocean and abolished distances. On September 9, after five days of heavy rain, as the Sisters were preparing to leave Saint Louis to go to Carondelet, the Bishop said to them: "I did not wish you to lose your fresh, pink cheeks." He did not tell them that, if he kept them while the rain lasted, it was because, at Carondelet, he had to enlarge the very small house which at present had no roof.

"The day of our arrival, the weather was beautiful," said Sister Saint John. "Our first care was to open the trunks and distribute the presents from France. Everybody was joyful, when suddenly, a down-pour of rain flooded our heads, our trunks and our books. Our books especially caused us anxiety.

"Our good Mother Delphine, having provided for our arrival, of which she now was beginning to despair, had rented near the garden a hut abandoned for three years by the owners. We hastened to go there, but made little progress, as the mud reached to our ankles. Some mattresses stretched on the floor would have permitted us to have a little rest, if we had not had for our companions, rats, mice, and parasites of all kinds, which, without fear if not without reproaches, ran over our beds. At last, the roof was put on the house, the hut was emptied and the plague ended, as does everything here below."

The next week, the Bishop brought the first deaf-mute. The poor child became blind a few years later and died insane at the age of twenty. In October of the same year, Carondelet received its first American postulant. She was Anne Eliza Dillon, daughter of Patrick McAndrews Dillon, a rich Irishman of Saint Louis. Miss Dillon, born at Saint Charles, Missouri, in 1820, lost her mother when she was quite young. She and her sister were sent to the Mesdames of the Sacred Heart in Saint Louis as boarders. They received an excellent education and spoke French fluently.

Sister Delphine and her companions, who went to the Sacred Heart convent to take lessons in English, met Miss Dillon there. The latter had been appointed by the Superior to hold long and frequent conversations with the Sisters in their native language. These conversations had drawn these souls close together and permitted them to appreciate one another. Miss Dillon was strongly attached to the Sisters of Saint Joseph, whose simple, modest and deeply sincere virtues she admired. The next year, when she learned of the foundation of Carondelet, the extreme poverty of this house and the serenity of soul with which the Sisters bore with disagreeable things, she said to herself: "I shall be one of them."

Mr. Dillon refused to consent to his daughter's wish. The young girl was firm, struggled respectfully with paternal authority and succeeded in winning this consent. She entered in October and was clothed with the habit of the Institute on January 3, 1838, receiving the name of Sister Mary Francis Joseph. She was generally known as Sister Mary Joseph. Sister Mary Joseph was a blessing from God for the young community, as she was capable of teaching French as well as English. She was a valuable asset. Her affable manner, and her exquisite delicacy made the common life easy and pleasant; while at the same time, her solid, amiable virtue and her invincible strength of character filled Mother Delphine's soul with joy and hope. Her example attracted excellent subjects to Carondelet.

As the number of pupils increased daily, it was again necessary to enlarge the house. The resources from France made this possible. Several young people of the most respectable families entered the novitiate where they walked ardently "in the hard road of sacrifice and perfection." Grace seemed to change privations into sweetness; they were so happy to forget themselves, to deny themselves and to suffer. As the grain cast into the earth seems to die before taking root and growing into a beautiful stem, so the religious establishment of Carondelet, after taking root in the most absolute distress, began to grow and to blossom; and its flowers promised the beautiful fruits which it still continues to produce.

Cahokia, as well as Carondelet, had its joys and consolations. In 1838, a stone chapel was built. The countess had supplied part of the money, a rich woman of the country gave the rest and Mother Saint John sent, God knows with what joy, stations of the cross, candlesticks, candelabra, ornaments, flowers and a bell made in Lyons. On August 12 of that year, Bishop Rosati blessed the bell and the chapel. The same day, Sister Saint Protais made her vows.

The good Canadians were delighted because they loved their "Abbey," and the peal of the Catholic bell on the river bank and the edges of the forest had a great charm for them. The Sisters were saints who had come from France to teach their children, to help their poor and to assist their sick. They venerated and loved them as their mothers.

From Switzerland the countess wrote: "On what are you living? Is your health good? Answer me quickly because I wish to send you a package. Tell me the things you need. Give me details of your establishments, of the good they do and the resources you have." She gave them information about the convents of Touraine, Vendée and other cities.

Mother Saint John, from afar, sustained her dear, generous missionaries by most encouraging exhortations:

"All here recalls to me the memory of my well-loved children; and I still meet you in all the places where I saw you so many times. It seems to me, that it is a century since I have heard from you, and I do not know how you are. The affection I have for you does not permit me to remain waiting any longer; for the distance which separates us, far from lessening my affection, makes it only more intense and tender.

"If the ocean separates us, eternity will unite us. I cannot express to you perfectly the joy I experience in this thought. 'Eternity will unite us,' gives me consolation. What joy on our first meeting in Heaven. We will then be united, never more to be separated.

"Write to me at the first chance. Give me details of all you do or suffer. Pour into the heart of a Mother, who loves you tenderly, your sorrows, your cares and your joys, if you have any. I will share all. Do not let me think that America makes you forget your old Mother, who embraces you all in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

"In whatever part of this world we may be, we are never exiled, never far from the eyes of our Heavenly Father. In Europe, as well as in America, He is everywhere witness of our works and struggles. When I think that you are separated from me in another world, I am consoled by the thought that we are all united in the bosom of God. My entire wish is that you be saints, and that your communities be regular and edifying. I implore God to pour down upon you His choicest blessings and to assist you always with His grace."

In the American communities, each word of these precious letters was received with religious respect; and the ocean only apparently separated the Mother from her daughters. Her daughters found the venerable Mother's heart in her letters and in all the little packages she sent them from France,—money, pictures, crucifixes, rosaries and medals for the pupils, the novices and their relatives. Since her daughters had left Lyons, in spite of her great age, she multiplied her visits to Fourvière. She used to say: "I must bring my children's needs to the Blessed Virgin." The following words express the value the Sisters placed on her motherly interest: "Her prayers have been a gentle, fruitful rain on our American mustard seed, as her example, virtue and advice have been for us a torch and a rule of perfection."

Nevertheless, the Mississippi was a bad neighbor for the convent of Cahokia and for the inhabitants of the country. Without considering the harm it might do to the people of its vicinity, it suddenly overflowed its banks and flooded the country. Mother Febronia had warnings of this danger on several occasions and was forced to seek refuge with the Sisters in Carondelet. When the waters subsided, the Sisters returned to their plague-stricken neighborhood, which they found ravaged by fever, the aftermath of the flood.

In 1839, Mother Febronia was so seriously ill that Mother Delphine asked to be relieved from her duties in Carondelet that she might take care of her. She spent almost a year in Cahokia and left it to go to Saint Louis, where His Lordship confided to her the direction of the schools.

Floods again visited the ill-fated Cahokia, compelling the entire population to flee. The Sisters, entrapped in their convent, saw the waters reach the first floor and continue to rise. Death seemed inevitable when suddenly a boat, sailing over the fields, the palisades and the enclosures, approached the convent. A plank, thrown from the boat to the window, served as a footbridge. The Sisters were saved. Once again Carondelet was a refuge.

As a result of this flood and of the fevers that followed in its train, Cahokia was completely depopulated and the mission was abandoned. Mother Febronia contracted an illness from which she suffered so intensely that she and her namesake, Sister Febronia, who was also in poor health, were ordered by the doctors to return to France.

CHAPTER XXIX

SPRINGING UP

A BELL from Lyons was received with transports of joy by the Sisters in Carondelet. One of them said very feelingly: "When this bell rings, we shall think we hear the voice of our dear Reverend Mother calling us to the community exercises and recommending us to regularity." This bell bears the following inscription in French:

> "Presented by Mother Saint John Fontbonne, Superioress of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, and Sister Josephine Vacher, to Sister Delphine Fontbonne, Superioress at Carondelet. A. D. 1838. Gédéon Morel, Caster, Lyons." [1]

When Mother Delphine resigned her charge in Carondelet to perform a duty of charity in Cahokia, Sister Celestine Pommerel replaced her as Superior. The convent in Carondelet, placed on a very fine footing by Mother Delphine, continued to prosper. The virtue and great accomplishments of Mother Celestine gave it a development and completion worthy of its pious origin. Mesdames Turgeon, Boismenu and Jarrot, who were much attached to Mother Delphine, extended their kindness to her successor, and proved themselves generous benefactresses of the community. One of them, Madame Jarrot, had given royal hospitality to General Lafayette in 1827. From Carondelet, the general had gone to South Berwick, Maine, to see an acquaintance from Boston, who had been of great assistance to him during the War of Independence. The hotel, where Lafayette stayed in South Berwick, became, in 1920, the property of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyons, who had been living in it as tenants since 1909. Their novitiate is now there. Mother Celestine died in Carondelet on June 7, 1857, which place also witnessed the death of Sisters Philomene and

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[1] See: *Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet.* Sister Lucida Savage.

Félicité; the former on November 11, 1861, the latter, on September 23, 1881.

At present the community of Carondelet, since it is provincial, is the largest Congregation of Saint Joseph in America. Most bishops in the United States, as well as in other countries, prefer to have diocesan communities. The Sisters in America, whether provincial or diocesan, do not forget that they are daughters of Mother Saint John and the Sisters in France remember that they are the Sisters of those in America.

It was in 1840 that Mother Delphine with Sister Saint John Fournier and two other Sisters from Carondelet went to Saint Louis. The community of Carondelet, through its novitiate, could begin to expand while supporting and developing its own works. Bishop Rosati's health obliged him to return to France, in 1841. His coadjutor, Peter Richard Kenrick, succeeded him. Young, pious, zealous and of rare ability, Bishop Kenrick continued the work of his predecessor. Bishop Rosati was the first Bishop of Saint Louis, Bishop Kenrick its first Archbishop. He had a large house built for the Sisters of Saint Joseph and confided to them the care of the orphan asylum, as well as that of the schools. Carondelet again sent subjects for this work, with Sister Saint John Fournier as Superior.

When the Sisters entered this asylum, they found seventy-five little boys afflicted with skin disease and covered with vermin. These children, absolutely undisciplined, had no idea of obedience. Things were disagreeable, but there, as in other places, they had assistance from God. The vermin and the malady disappeared and, what was still better, the children became pious and docile.

In 1845, Bishop Kenrick established on Third Street a school for Catholic colored girls, the daughters of free negroes. Let us listen to Sister Saint John Fournier:

> "Obedience sent me there with two Sisters. We were preparing these girls for the reception of the Sacraments. This so displeased the white people that they threatened to drive us away by force. The leaders came every day. One morning, several persons spoke to me after Mass and warned me that the next night we were to

be driven from the house. I had no fear and said nothing to the Sisters because I had so much confidence in the Blessed Virgin. I placed miraculous medals on the street door and on the fence. That night, at eleven o'clock, a great noise suddenly awakened the Sisters. A crowd of men, gathered in the street, were screaming and blaspheming. We cast ourselves on our knees and began the *Miserere* and other prayers. In the meantime, the enraged mob rushed upon the door. The police arrived and drove them away.

"They returned three times that night. The Blessed Virgin protected us. In spite of their fury and their efforts they succeeded neither in opening nor forcing the door. The day after this occurrence, the Mayor of Saint Louis advised Bishop Kenrick to close the school for the time being. Peace was restored. The Sisters' schools received indiscriminately rich and poor, Catholics, Protestants, schismatics, and children of all religions. A few years later, the asylum alone numbered two hundred fifty orphans."

When the Sisters of Charity gave up the care of the orphans in Saint John's Asylum, Thirteenth and Chestnut Streets, the Right Reverend Bishop of Philadelphia, Francis Patrick Kenrick, having seen the good performed by the Sisters in the capital of Missouri, asked his brother to give him some of these zealous workers for his episcopal city, which was sorely in need of them. Archbishop Kenrick could not remain deaf to this appeal.

On May 4, 1847, Mother Saint John Fournier, with Sister Magdalen Weber and Sister Elizabeth Kincaid, arrived in Philadelphia and took charge of Saint John's Orphan Asylum on May 6, 1847. At that time the Sisters of Saint Joseph were still under the obedience of the Motherhood of Lyons. The Superior of Saint Louis was Mother Celestine, under whose authority the Philadelphia foundation had been begun.

In 1850, Mother Saint John Fournier was recalled to Saint Louis and sent thence to found missions in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She was succeeded as Superior of the Philadelphia convents, first, by Mother Delphine, and later by Mother Agnes Spencer. Through the kind mediation of Right Reverend Bishop Neumann, Mother Saint John Fournier was restored to Philadelphia, in May, 1853.

Amazed at the work in Philadelphia, the Bishop of Toronto, Right Reverend Armand Charbonnel, asked for Sisters and obtained them. "His Lordship, on his return from Rome in the autumn of 1851, visited Bishop Kenrick in Philadelphia. While there, he met Mother Delphine whose aunt, Reverend Mother Saint John, was well known to the Charbonnel family. The Bishop, esteeming the young kinswoman as a valiant woman and capable of undertaking a work which he had in mind, begged the good Bishop Kenrick to allow her, with three other Sisters, to come to his aid in Toronto, where they arrived on October 7, 1851.[2]

In a letter addressed to Father Denavit, director of the Grand Seminary of Lyons, Bishop Charbonnel said, with reference to the Sisters of Saint Joseph: "I could make use of one hundred of them at once, if I had them. The Sisters are called to do immense good here. They give everything but absolution." Mother Delphine went from Toronto to establish a mission in Hamilton. Returning to Toronto to assist in caring for the victims of a typhus epidemic, she contracted the disease and died a victim of her devotion on February 7, 1856.

In the meantime, in Philadelphia, Mother Saint John Fournier was sowing the seeds of the virtues required by her Institute, and was reaping the fruits thereof in the many blessings God bestowed on her foundation. "The Sisters of Saint Joseph," she used to say, "should not show themselves; they should love to remain in their little corner." She herself, whose good works, fervent prayers and generous sacrifices were inseparable from her life, was an outstanding example of the retirement she recommended. To all ordinary works of charity and zeal, Mother Saint John Fournier added another very beneficial one: "The apostolate of books." At that time, America was not rich in books of piety, and the convent libraries were very poor. The novitiates receiving subjects in America needed books in the language spoken there. That her daughters might maintain and increase their fervor and, at the same time, that souls outside of the community might be reached, she sent to France for several excellent spiritual books, and translated them into English. Some of these books are still read in America and they produce much fruit.

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[2] *Diamond Jubilee, Saint Joseph's Convent,* Toronto, 1926, p. 5.

The last twelve years of Mother Saint John Fournier's life were a real martyrdom. She bore, with the greatest patience, the frequent attacks of liver trouble and dropsy with which she was afflicted; and as soon as there was any relief, the valiant Mother resumed her works. It was thus that between a series of painful illnesses, she embroidered a rochet for the Holy Father. This was to prove to the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX, the great sympathy she had for him in his trials, and to show him her respectful devotion and filial affection.

Mother Saint John Fournier was greatly devoted to Pius IX as the Head of the Church. This devotedness, doubtless, had existed in a latent state ever since she had realized her duties toward the Father of the Faithful; but she became conscious of it in 1848, when he had to take refuge in Gaëta to protect himself from the treachery of secret societies. This devotedness grew after the defeat of Austria in 1859, when the revolutionary Italians invaded the States of the Church and crushed the pontifical army at Castelfidardo. It increased still more in 1870, when the Italian government declared Rome the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, and left the despoiled Pontiff only his title of King and the Vatican Palace. It was then that the idea came to her to embroider the rochet.

Mother Saint John Fournier died before she could send the rochet to Rome, but her intentions were respected by her pious daughters. The worthy assistant, Mother Mary John, who succeeded her as Superior General, explained, in a letter to the Sovereign Pontiff, the story of this work conceived by the heart of a true child of the Church and accomplished in the midst of suffering. A friend of the community, who was going to Rome, took the letter and the rochet. In a private audience, he presented both to the Holy Father. Piux IX read the letter and said with deep emotion: "May she rest in peace!" Then, taking his pen, he wrote on the back of the letter:

"November 23, 1875

"May God bless you and your good works, and may He grant peace to her who has departed.

"Pius IX, Pope."

This precious document is piously kept in the archives of the community, and will pass, as a heritage, to future generations.

Mother Saint John Fournier died on October 15, 1875. She was sixty-one years old, thirty-eight of which had been spent in the United States. The Archbishop presided at her obsequies and pronounced a funeral oration, from which we shall quote but a few lines: "The loss of this extraordinary woman is greater and will be more deeply felt than that of any other person in the Diocese of Philadelphia."

In support of these words, His Lordship proved that it was this humble Sister of Saint Joseph who had established the greatest number of parochial schools and almost all the academies. "Mount Saint Joseph," the Motherhouse and Novitiate of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia, picturesquely situated in Chestnut Hill, an attractive suburb of that famous city, is a monument to the practical side of the character of this holy foundress. The Sisters conduct about one hundred twenty-five establishments, including parochial schools (one hundred twenty-one, elementary; thirteen, high), one college, seven academies, a Home for Aged, three orphanages, an Industrial School, a Deaf-Mute Institute, a Deaf-Mute Sunday School, a Catholic Women's Club, a Home for Working-Girls, a Day Nursery, and a Ladies' Catechetical Class. The congregation is represented in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Baltimore, and in the Dioceses of Harrisburg, Newark, Trenton and Wilmington. The total number of Religious (1936) is approximately one thousand seven hundred fifty.[3]

There are many convents also in Upper Canada and in the southern part of the United States. The mustard seed sown in the fertile soil of Carondelet and Toronto by the pioneer Sisters has increased. A few passages from Mother Saint John Fournier's letters, chosen at random, will prove it:

"Bishop Crétin, of Saint Paul, asked Carondelet to send Sisters for this city, where there were not as yet any streets or roads. Trees had to be cut to make a passage for the Sisters when they arrived. The stumps were left and, as the snow covered the ground in winter, we made many respectful genuflections on our way to church, when we did not happen to kiss the ground. One morning, a famished wolf appeared showing, by his attitude, that he intended having for his meal either the part or whole of my body. Thank God, he had nothing; but after this, Bishop Crétin came to say Mass in the house, which this worthy prelate ceded to us on our arrival. This *palace* consisted of one room and an attic open to the winds."

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[3] Data from Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia.

"On December 8, 1854, the first foundation of the Congregation of Saint Joseph in New York State was made at Canandaigua, sometimes called 'Sleeping Beauty.' In response to an appeal made by the Right Reverend John Timon, Bishop of the newly erected See of Buffalo, a band of four Sisters,—Mother Agnes Spencer, Sister Frances Joseph Ivory, Sister Petronella Roscoe and Sister Theodosia Hageman,—had been sent from Carondelet to make this new establishment. Early in January, 1855, the Sisters opened an academy and free school and took charge of the orphans. A novitiate was established and postulants were received into the community. The ceremony of profession took place in Saint Mary's Church until 1858.

"In 1857, Bishop Timon asked the community to open an institution for deaf-mutes in Buffalo, N. Y. Three Sisters who had studied, in France, the most recent methods for this work, were sent from Carondelet. In 1865, the Sisters addressed a petition to the New York Legislature, asking that the Le Couteulx Institute might be included among those to which the State annually made appropriation for the education of the deaf and dumb. A bill to that effect was passed on April 28, 1875.[4] The foundation in Buffalo was under the care of the motherhouse in Canandaigua until 1861 when the administration was transferred to Buffalo, N. Y.

"In 1864, a band of Sisters opened an orphanage in Rochester, N. Y., primarily, to care for those children who had lost their fathers in the Civil War. In 1868, the Buffalo diocese was divided. The new Diocese of Rochester was erected under its first bishop, Right Reverend Bernard J. McQuaid, and the affiliation of the Sisters with Buffalo was dissolved. The new bishop selected the community as the teaching congregation of his diocese and established their motherhouse at Rochester.

"Parochial schools were soon opened and placed under the care of the Sisters. Within three years, he established Nazareth Academy, a boarding and high school for young ladies. Besides the academy and college, the Sisters teach in three High Schools, have charge of forty-three parochial schools in the diocese, two asylums, Saint Mary's and Saint Patrick's, two Conservatories of Music, Nazareth Hall for boys, Saint Joseph's Hospital and Nurses Training School, and Nazareth Normal School for Religious. All these institutions have the approval of the University of the State of New York.[5]

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[4] *Mother Saint John*—translation by Sisters of Saint Joseph, Philadelphia.

"In the Diocese of Wheeling, West Virginia, six Sisters arrived from Carondelet and took possession of a small house which they called the *hospital.* It was maintained by a Protestant pastor. The Sisters entered it, with the approval and under the auspices of Bishop Whelan. The Civil War [6] doubled the work of the Sisters. The government took possession of the hospital, but retained the Sisters. The cities were in a state of siege. In the beginning, the Sisters were exposed to all kinds of persecution, but everything changed when the authorities realized the care they gave the wounded. The Sisters had the consolation of baptizing many soldiers at the moment of death; but much suffering accompanied these consolations. As beds were lacking for the two hundred wounded, the floor was the only place to put many of the unfortunate soldiers.

"During the Civil War, detachments of Sisters from Philadelphia, nursed the sick soldiers in Camp Curtin and the Church Hospital, Harrisburg; later, under Surgeon General Smith, they had more active duty in the floating hospitals which received the wounded from the southern battlefields."

Returning to the Sisters of Carondelet, we find that they established missions in Charleston and Clarksburg and also devoted themselves to the Indian tribes that were grouped around the capital of Missouri. They went among these poor savages giving instruction to the children, caring for the sick and proclaiming the good God to everybody. In Michigan, on the southern shore of Lake Superior, a tribe had been enclosed in the Bay of Anse. Bishop Baraga, the first and illustrious Bishop of Michigan, remained for a long time near this bay, sowed the word of God among the tribes and won the affection of the Indians, who embraced the Catholic religion. In gratitude, they asked to give his name to their reservation. The government consented and the Bay of Anse was called Baraga Bay. The name of the town has been changed to Assinins. Speaking of the Indians brings us back to Sister Saint Protais. After the closing of Cahokia, she went to Carondelet. As she thought only of the Redskins, she was sent to Baraga Bay. She died there on April 12, 1892.

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[5] Notes furnished by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Rochester, N. Y.

[6] In a speech in the House of Representatives on Monday, March 18, 1918, Honorable Ambrose Kennedy paid a great tribute to Mother de Chantal Keating of Wheeling, West Virginia. "For four years during the war, with other members of her community, she rendered aid and comfort to many distressed and afflicted soldiers at White Sulphur Springs, and also at Wheeling Hospital. Mother de Chantal was one of the nuns who received from the Grand Army of the Republic a bronze medal as a token of her devotion to the soldiers."

Nuns of the Battlefield, p. 174, Ellen Ryan Jolly.

Mother de Chantal was a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Brentwood, N. Y. (Translator's note).

Father Fontbonne had to return to France on account of his health. On his arrival, he served as chaplain for the Incurables of Vaise. When his health improved, he was appointed parish priest in a little village of the Department of the Loire, and did excellent work. In his old age, he retired to Changy, near Roanne, where his sister, Mother Febronia, was Superior. He died there in 1886.

Mother Febronia died on Palm Sunday, April 10, 1881, aged seventy-five. Sister Febronia Chapellon, who returned to France with her, also died in Changy on April 3, 1890. The Countess de la Rochejaquelein died on her estate of Ussé, on January 7, 1883. She had the joy of seeing the mustard seed of the United States become a large tree.

"The magnificent colony of Sisters of Saint Joseph in America is one of the greatest glories and grandest works of their blessed congregation. It is the worthy crowning of the long and saintly administration of Mother Saint John." Today there are Sisters of Saint Joseph in the United States and Canada; there are some, too, in South America, notably in Brazil, where they are occupied with all charitable works. "United or separated, the communities of Saint Joseph in America, as in France, rival one another in fervor and regularity, and religiously preserve the memory and spirit of the Reverend Mother Saint John."

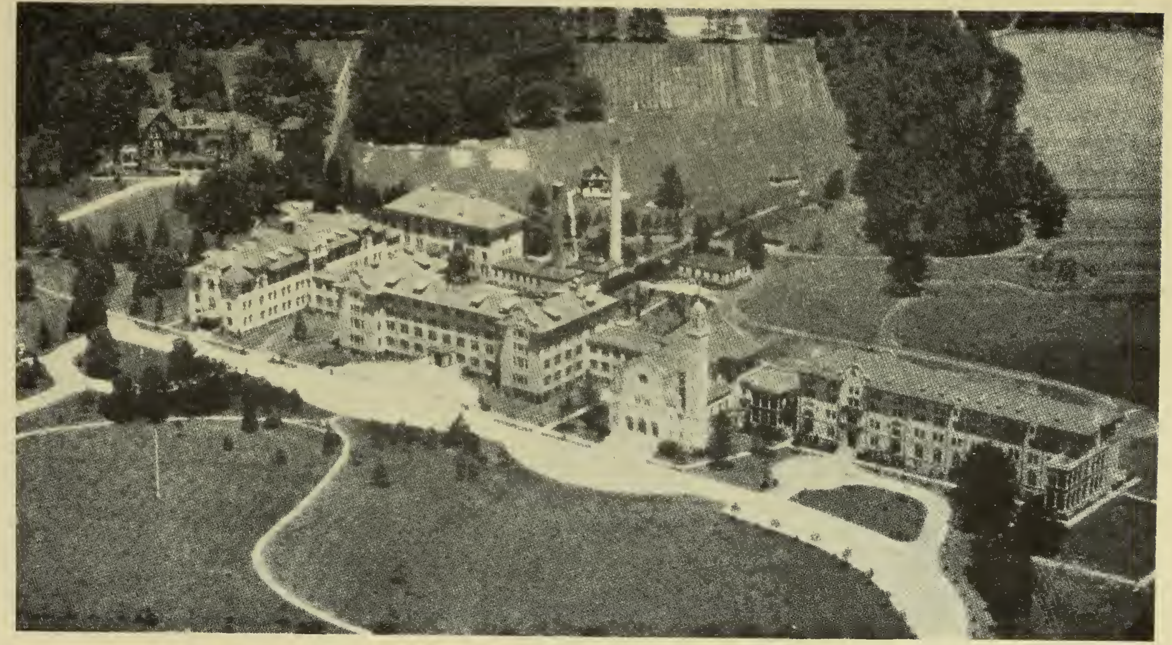
CHAPTER XXX

BECOMETH A TREE

AT THE invitation of Most Reverend John Loughlin, Bishop of Brooklyn, the Sisters of Saint Joseph came from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia on September 1st, 1856; and, on the eighth of that month, they opened their first educational institution, Saint Mary's Academy, Williamsburg. The Superior was Mother Mary Austin Kean, a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who had made her religious profession into the hands of venerable John J. Neumann, of saintly memory. Her assistant, Sister Mary Baptist Hanson, a native of Baltimore, Maryland, had the privilege of being received into the community at Philadelphia by the Venerable John Neumann. The third of the pioneers was Sister Mary Theodosia Barry who had been received and professed in Saint Joseph's Convent, Carondelet, Missouri. In September, 1857, the Sisters took charge of the parochial school connected with the Church of Saints Peter and Paul; and in 1859, in addition to the Academy, they opened a parochial school in Saint Mary's parish.

In those days the spirit of the Know-Nothing Movement was rife and often hazarded the safety of the Sisters. As it was dangerous for them to appear on the street wearing a religious habit, the Sisters were obliged to assume a disguise, which, however, did not always preserve them from insults and annoyance. Though the members of the little community were surrounded by dangers, they were happy; and their undertakings were accompanied with manifold blessings.

The novitiate was opened by the Sisters on the first of March, 1857. The first postulant to enter the community was Maria Tello, who was sent to McSherrytown, Pennsylvania, for her religious training. After receiving the holy habit and the name, Sister Mary Hortense, she returned to Brooklyn to com-



MOTHERHOUSE OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH
BRENTWOOD, NEW YORK

plete her novitiate under the direction of Bishop Loughlin. The Most Reverend Bishop took a deep and personal interest in the religious formation of the novices. He gave them weekly conferences, strengthening them in their holy vocation and moulding them as models and exemplars for the future members of the congregation. When in later years, references were made to the lessons he had so kindly taught the seniors of the community, he would say: "Yes, the first Sisters needed that extra care and attention. They were the foundation stones of a great religious structure."

After a few years, it was found necessary to seek more commodious quarters for the motherhouse and novitiate. The Sisters purchased, for this purpose, the large frame building known as Saint Thomas' Hall in the village of Flushing. The transfer from Brooklyn to Flushing was a great undertaking at that time. The savings of five years were insufficient to pay for the property. With a heavy debt upon their shoulders, the Sisters, numbering only fifteen, opened their new convent in Flushing on August 1st, 1860, under Mother Mary Austin, and set to work to try to make a success of what at first seemed to be a rather difficult enterprise. Patience and time effected great change and improvements.

As early as 1868, a substantial brick structure replaced the old building. Gradually, additions were made; and the chapel, a splendid specimen of Romanesque architecture, completed the imposing group of buildings known as Saint Joseph's Academy, Flushing. On August 26, 1860, Ellen Bowen, known in religion as Sister Mary Cecilia, received the holy habit at the first reception held in the new Flushing Chapel. Sister Cecilia later became the foundress of the now flourishing community of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Springfield, Massachusetts.

After Mother Austin had wisely directed and successfully governed the young community for nine years, she resigned her charge as Superior General, and was succeeded in office by Mother Mary Baptist Hanson, her assistant. During her term of office, Mother Baptist showed great executive ability in the planning and erection of the main building of the time-honored convent and academy at Flushing. When her term of office expired, Mother Baptist was assigned to open and to take charge of Saint John's Home, Brooklyn. For twenty years she presided over this institution, which, as a field of labor, afforded ample scope for her zeal and truly maternal interest in the spiritual and temporal welfare of the orphans.

Mother Mary Teresa Mullen was elected Superior General of the community as successor to Mother Baptist in August, 1868. During her long administration of twenty-four years, Mother Teresa exemplified in her life all the virtues of a faithful, devoted religious and a kind Superior. It was during her term of office that the present beautiful chapel, so venerated by the Sisters, was erected in Flushing.

The first pupil of the Academy of Saint Joseph, Flushing, was Mary Crummey, who at the close of her academic course entered the novitiate and was known later as Sister Mary Louis. For years Sister Mary Louis was directress of the excellent Department of Music for which Saint Joseph's Academy is celebrated. When Mother Teresa's health failed, Sister Mary Louis was chosen as Superior General of the Congregation of Brooklyn. For nearly forty years Mother Mary Louis governed the community with rare prudence, wisdom, firmness and kindness. God's blessing rested on all her undertakings.

The growth of the work of the community was phenomenal. In the early years of her administration, it became evident that larger buildings were necessary for the novitiate and the academy. With the assistance of the Most Reverend Bishop, Charles Edward McDonnell, on February 11, 1896, the Sisters secured a valuable piece of property, formerly known as "Pine Park," Brentwood. The Bishop loved Brentwood and spared no pains to advance the welfare of the novitiate and the academy. The first wing of the present magnificent group of buildings was ready for occupancy in September, 1903, and the academy and the novitiate were transferred from Flushing. The same kindly coöperation and fatherly concern shown by Bishop McDonnell toward the community, has been continued by his esteemed and zealous successor, the Most Reverend Thomas E. Molloy, S.T.D. The deep interest of the Most Reverend Bishop has ever been a source of inspiration and encouragement to the community.

The crowning glory of Reverend Mother Mary Louis' long and saintly life was the erection of the beautiful convent of Saint Joseph and the architectural gem, the Chapel of the Sacred Heart. In this work her efforts were ably seconded by her assistant, Sister Jane Frances Dowling, who, in 1932, on the death of Reverend Mother Mary Louis, was elected Superior General. Reverend Mother Jane Frances had filled various offices,—teacher, assistant to the Superior, and Superior—at Saint John's Home, Brooklyn. For many years before her election as assistant to the Superior General, she was a member of the General Council. Mother Jane Frances brought to the office a wide experience, marked executive ability and a kindly and sympathetic knowledge of human nature, which, with the Divine assistance, impels her to guide her community toward the attainment of the highest ideals of the religious life.

The Sisters conduct, at present, in the Diocese of Brooklyn, a college and several community high schools and academies. A large number of Sisters are engaged as teachers in the Diocesan High Schools, and many others in more than fifty parochial schools. The Sisters also have charge of two hospitals and two child-caring institutions. This forms the work of nearly twelve hundred Sisters of Saint Joseph in the Diocese of Brooklyn.

In 1930 the community inaugurated a new field of labor in the opening of a foreign mission in San German, Puerto Rico. In addition to the work of the parochial school, the Sisters teach Christian Doctrine every week to several hundred public school children. In 1935, a high school department was added to the elementary school. The Sisters also direct the Catholic Training School for Nurses in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Through the self-sacrificing zeal of the venerable Bishop Loughlin and the saintly Mother Teresa, four foundations were made in other dioceses: Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, 1869;

Rutland, Vermont, 1873; Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, 1873, and Springfield, Massachusetts, 1880.

The novitiate of Ebensburg was opened in 1869, on the site of the missionary labors of Reverend Demetrius Gallitzin, a Russian prince, who was the pioneer priest in western Pennsylvania. The novitiate was transferred later to Baden, Pennsylvania. The boarding-school is also located in Baden and still keeps the name "Mount Gallitzin." There are eight houses in Ohio. The old motherhouse in Ebensburg was purchased by the Diocese of Altoona for an infant home and the Sisters were retained to manage it. Besides this institution, the Sisters have six parochial schools in the Altoona Diocese, and form a part of the teaching staff of the Central Catholic High Schools in Altoona and Johnstown. In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Sisters conduct twenty-five parochial schools and one hospital, Saint Joseph's, besides the institutions at the motherhouse. The latter consist of a boarding-school, an elementary and a junior high school for boys, as well as a day-school for girls which offers a four year course. In 1926, the Sisters began work in the foreign mission field. At present there are six Sisters laboring in the Passionist Province of Hunan in China, where they have charge of a girls' school and a dispensary.[1]

In September, 1873, at the invitation of Bishop de Goesbriand, Mother Austin of Saint Joseph's Convent, Flushing, and three other Sisters went to Saint Peter's parish, Rutland, Vermont. In 1876, it was decided to open a motherhouse and thus have a diocesan community, independent of Brooklyn. Mother Philip was selected as Superior, and the pastor, Reverend Charles Boylan, gave his home to the Sisters. Ground was broken for the present Mount Saint Joseph Convent on July 4, 1877. While devoting their time to the education of the Catholic children of Rutland, the Sisters also give weekly religious instruction to the children of some of the near-by parishes.

When, in the spring of 1874, the Catholic children of Brattleboro were dismissed from the public school for having at-

[1] Data from Sisters of Saint Joseph of Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

tended Mass on a holy day, Father Lane, the pastor, sought redress from the school authorities. He received none and appealed to the court, which also decided against him. The erection of a Catholic school was at once undertaken and in September Sister Catherine and four Sisters went there from Flushing. There are now four parochial schools and a Catholic High School in Brattleboro.

The centennial year, 1876, saw the opening of Saint Francis de Sales School in Bennington. As in the other missions, the Sisters went from Flushing with Sister Gregory as Superior. The Sacred Heart School for French children was opened in 1893 by Father Prevost. In 1925, on the Putnam property, the Sisters opened a day nursery for the children whose mothers worked in the mills. Some of the Sisters give weekly religious instruction to the children of North Bennington and Manchester.

Bellows Falls Mission was opened in 1913. Reverend John Reynolds bought the old brick public high school for the parochial school. Every Saturday, two of the Sisters spend their day between Proctorsville and Ludlow giving religious instruction to the children in these places. All these missions belong to the Diocese of Burlington.[2]

Father Thomas Magennis, pastor of Saint Thomas Church, Jamaica Plain, made every sacrifice to establish a school in his parish. When making a selection of teachers, he sought advice from Archbishop Williams, who told him to call on the Sisters of Saint Joseph in the Brooklyn Diocese. Father Magennis visited one of the schools conducted by these Sisters and was so impressed by the wholesome atmosphere that pervaded the rooms that he hesitated no longer, and obtained permission for them to teach in Saint Thomas School. On October 2, 1873, four Sisters went to Jamaica Plain: Sister Mary Regis, Superior, Sister Mary Clare, Sister Mary Felix and Sister Mary Dolores. Archbishop Williams was so pleased with their work that he told Father Magennis to write to the Bishop of Brooklyn applying for the establishment of a novitiate in the Archdiocese of Boston.

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[2] Data from Sisters of Saint Joseph of Rutland, Vermont.

The novitiate was canonically erected on October 24, 1876, and Father Magennis was delegated to visit the churches of the archdiocese to seek subjects for the new foundation. The first two postulants were Ann Elizabeth McLaughlin of Marlboro, who entered on December 5, 1876, and Catherine Cassidy of Boston, who entered on December 6. The first public profession and reception into the community took place in Saint Thomas Church, Jamaica Plain, on October 17, 1878, when two postulants received the holy habit and two novices made their profession. On April 24, 1885, the novitiate was transferred to Fresh Pond, Cambridge. There were, at that time, thirty-two professed Sisters in the community.

During the superiorship of Mother Mary Teresa, who succeeded Mother Regis, the present building of Mount Saint Joseph Academy at Brighton was erected and the novitiate was transferred thither on October 29, 1891. On July 15, 1893, Sister Mary de Chantal was elected Superior General. The novitiate was transferred to Canton, where it remained until 1923 when it was removed to its present home in Framingham. Mother de Chantal was succeeded in office by Sister Mary Genevieve.

In Randolph, in 1904, the Sisters opened the Boston School for the Deaf which has taken care of from 200 to 300 children every year. Mother Mary Borgia succeeded Mother Genevieve and remained as head of the community until 1922. At her death Mother Mary Domitilla became Superior General. During her term of office, Regis College was opened,—the first resident Catholic college for women in Massachusetts. At the present time the schools in the Archdiocese of Boston number sixty-six and the Sisters number thirteen hundred.[3]

The Sisters of Saint Joseph from Flushing, New York, were welcomed to Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, in September, 1880, by Most Reverend P. T. O'Reilly, D.D., first Bishop of Springfield. Their first assignment was Saint Patrick's parochial school. Sister Mary Cecilia was the first Superior. Saint Louis' School, Webster, was opened the following year. On June 17, 1881, the cornerstone was laid for Saint Michael's school in the Cathedral Parish. The building was dedicated on November 26, 1882. When the school was completed, Right Reverend Bishop O'Reilly went to Flushing to apply for Sisters of Saint Joseph to teach there, and to make arrangements with Reverend Mother Teresa for the establishment of a novitiate in Springfield.

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[3] Data from Sisters of Saint Joseph of Boston, Massachusetts.

Mother Cecilia was appointed Superior of the third foundation with the supervision of the other houses in the diocese, now dependencies of the new motherhouse. On Wednesday, August 22, 1883, Mother Cecilia went to Springfield with two Sisters, who were to assist in the schools. Sister Mary Basil, assistant to Mother Cecilia in Chicopee Falls, was appointed Superior of Saint Patrick's Convent and School.

Saint Michael's Cathedral School opened on Monday, September 1, 1883. The teaching corps was increased by the arrival of three candidates for admission to the new novitiate. During the first year, the candidates received the Holy Habit at Flushing or Rutland. It was Mother Cecilia's wish that the first reception in this new foundation be held on Saint Teresa's Day, October 15, the anniversary of the first reception in 1650, the date of the foundation of the Congregation of Saint Joseph in France.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Springfield have now thirty-four houses, thirty-two parochial schools, seventeen high schools, one academy and one Liberal Arts College for the higher education of women. There is also a scholasticate connected with the novitiate. Besides teaching in the schools of the diocese, the Sisters conduct Christian Doctrine classes on Saturdays and Sundays in many parishes, where there is no parochial school. They also teach vocal and instrumental music.[4]

Since the arrival in Saint Louis on March 25, 1836, of the six pioneer Sisters from Lyons, France, other foundations have been made by the Congregations of Bourg, Le Puy, Chambéry and Lyons: "In 1854, the Sisters were sent from Bourg to establish a house at Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi, in the Diocese of Natchez. In 1863, a novitiate was opened at New Orleans, and later, one was established at Cedar Point, Hamilton County, Ohio. In 1904, the Sisters from Bourg opened schools for French Canadians in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Sisters are now in charge of about nineteen educational institutions, including an asylum and a home for working-girls in the Archdioceses of Cincinnati, Dubuque and New Orleans and in the Dioceses of Crookstown, Duluth, Natchez and Superior. The Provincial lives in New Orleans, but the Superior General lives in Bourg." [5]

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[4] Data from Sisters of Saint Joseph of Springfield, Massachusetts.

In 1866, eight Sisters of Saint Joseph from Le Puy were sent to Saint Augustine, Florida, at the request of Bishop Verot to teach the colored people recently liberated by the Civil War. In 1880, a novitiate was established and about the same time, owing to the departure of the Sisters of Mercy from the city, the training of the impoverished whites devolved on the new community. In 1889, connection with the Motherhouse of Le Puy was broken and some of the French Sisters returned to France. The motherhouse of the Florida missions is in Saint Augustine. In 1902, nine Sisters from Le Puy established schools in the French parishes of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts. There are now eight missions in the province. In 1906, Saint Teresa's convent was formally opened as the provincial house of the community and a novitiate was established. The Superior General lives in Le Puy.[6]

At the request of the Congregation of Propaganda and with the approval of the Bishop of Springfield five Sisters were sent from Chambéry in 1885 to Lee, Massachusetts, to teach in the parochial schools. As their activities developed chiefly in the Diocese of Hartford, Connecticut, the novitiate was transferred there in 1898. The Sisters have charge of fifteen schools, two senior high schools, one junior high school, one orphanage for boys, two hospitals, and the domestic care of Saint Thomas' Seminary, La Salette Novitiate and La Salette College. The Superior General lives in Chambéry, France.[7]

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[5] Data from Sisters of Saint Joseph of New Orleans, Louisiana.

[6] Data from Sisters of Saint Joseph of Saint Augustine, Florida.

In 1909, the Motherhouse of Lyons opened a novitiate at South Berwick, Maine. The Sisters conduct four establishments in the Diocese of Portland, Maine.

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[7] Data from Sisters of Saint Joseph of Hartford, Connecticut.

BOOK III

Evening Rest

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CHAPTER I

A BITTER DRAUGHT

IT is getting late, nightfall is coming. Day is ending in one part of the earth, while, in another, a radiant dawn is rising over a life which will not see the setting of that day's sun. God approaches. Mother Saint John beholds the radiance which announces Him. Before the shadowy veil envelops the work, so beautiful, so saintly and so fruitful that she has just completed, let us look backward over her long life. One wonders how her energy sufficed to accomplish all she did. It was indeed a superhuman task, but Mother Saint John was not alone. Trusting in Divine Providence, she humbly used the natural and supernatural helps placed at her disposal,—in other words, she corresponded with grace. God did the rest.

Simultaneously with the ever growing need of Religious for every work of charity and zeal, eager souls were inspired to follow the call of the Master and to enroll themselves among the Sisters of Saint Joseph, under the direction of Mother Saint John. The entire world wanted these Religious, many of whose members had been plundered, chained or decapitated by France. We remember that Mother Saint John and her daughters aspired to the life of the cloister. Through His representative, God asked them to accept the duties of Martha and to devote themselves to the service of their neighbor. Divine desires appeared like commands to these souls dedicated to the Divine Will. Renouncing their own pleasure, they vowed to devote their lives to works of charity; but, while becoming Martha, they did not cease being Mary. If Mother Saint John worked so well, it was because she prayed much, for, in her, Mary had almost eclipsed Martha.

Now life was waning; for her, intensive work was about to stop. Martha was going to let Mary rest at the feet of the Master and contemplate Him at leisure. Not at once, however.

After founding the American mission, three years of labor still remained to her. Then we shall see her appearing once more in a nimbus of sanctity. To enjoy this vision, we must needs wait, for the persistent youth of Mother Saint John was part of God's plan. Old age, like youth, is a state of mind. One is young as long as he can smile, as long as he interests himself in the joys and sorrows of others, as long as he feels the desire to be well-disposed to his neighbor's service and to do good according to his strength. Mother Saint John never ceased being young. Until her death, one could see, forming on her lips, the kindly smile that revealed the serenity of soul and the benevolence which filled it. Until her death she wanted to serve the community and she did serve it.

In 1836, when she saw the names of her nieces on the list of missionaries for Missouri, she felt that a fiber of her heart had snapped and a sweet dream had vanished. Although her soul was young, her body was worn out; and she had decided to free herself from the responsibilities and cares of administration. She intended to spend the remaining years of her life in retreat and prayer. She had already prepared the place of this retreat in her mind. Her authority of Superior General would end in 1838. Before that date, she would appoint one of her nieces Superior in a small house of the Institute. At the assembling of the General Chapter, she would resign and retire to the house governed by her niece—there to live and die in peace.

That was her plan. It was not God's, however. When the virtuous Mother realized this, she did what she had done her whole life; she simply bent her will. While waiting for the time of the elections, she continued her noble task. According to the precepts of the Rule she visited her communities and, among them, that of Grand-Lemps, near Grenoble in the Department of l'Isère. This visit, which took place the day after the departure of the missionaries to the New World, brought great consolation.

After the signing of the Concordat, Father Caillet, Confessor of the Faith and parish priest of Grand-Lemps, had established a little association of pious women who lived in community without taking vows. This association had for its aim to help the priest in his ministry with the sick and with the children. Later, Father Caillet, named Vicar General of Grenoble, left Grand-Lemps. After his departure, those who were called "Sisters" were dispersed. Seven, however, did not want to be separated. These women were exposed to all kinds of annoyances. They would have succumbed if Divine Providence had not sent Mademoiselle de Virieu to their assistance.

She was the oldest daughter of the Count de Virieu, martyr to his devotion in the heroic defense of Lyons against the troops of the Convention. She had known all the hardships of adversity. Obliged to flee to a foreign country with her family, she lived there for more than five years in privations and anguish. In 1796, disguised as a beggar, she returned with her family to Montrevel. When peace was restored to France, the countess and her children were established in an old manor house which the family owned in Grand-Lemps.

Touched by the trials of these pious associates, who rendered excellent services in the parish, Mademoiselle de Varieu bought them property not far from the manor, and advised these virtuous women to affiliate themselves with the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyons. The steps which were taken toward this end succeeded. Mother Saint John sent two Sisters to teach them the Rule which would govern them henceforth. This new state of affairs brought several recruits and, on November 5, 1830, Father Caillet presided at the first reception of the habit. There were five choir and two lay Sisters. Five of the former associates did not consider themselves able to conform to the Rule of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. They remained in the house as assistants and were the objects, on the part of their companions, of consideration and most affectionate care.

Mother Saint John came to visit this community toward the end of her life. She would never have her portrait taken despite the entreaties of her daughters. Mademoiselle de Virieu knew of this refusal. She resolved to make this portrait the next time the venerable Mother came to her community;

because, on occasions like this, Mother Saint John never failed to visit their benefactress. When the visitor presented herself, the countess received her hospitably and began a long conversation, during which Mademoiselle Stéphanie sketched the features of the Mother, without her suspecting that the artist was reproducing her countenance on canvas. When she noticed it, the outline was drawn. She had to pose a few minutes until the portrait was finished.

It is to this visit to the Manor of Virieu that the Sisters of Saint Joseph owe the consolation of being able to contemplate the features of their venerable Mother. Mother Saint John was seventy-eight years old when she took this journey. It is rather late for a portrait, but let us regret nothing. If age no longer shows the graces of youth, it, by contrast, makes resplendent the traces of sanctity.

A visit to the convent of Micarême filled the heart of the good Mother with consolation. This community, which she had formerly adopted and directed, had greatly increased in numbers. Mother Saint John was happy; it gave her soul unutterable joy to see, that, even with the many occupations and the intense work, the community had lost none of its regularity nor its fervor. Micarême still had its monastic character, and those who lived there had the same zeal.

At that time, Micarême had for its Superior Mother Sacred Heart of Jesus, born Margaret Virginia Tézenas du Montcel. Her family, one of the most ancient and most honorable of Forez, "dated back to the Middle Ages,—long before 1388." God called two of the daughters of this noble family to work under the banner of Saint Joseph. The two sisters entered the Novitiate of Micarême. They rivalled each other in the practice of virtue, though they had not received equal gifts from the Master Who gives to each one her mission. "They were two beautiful flowers of exquisite perfume but differing from each other, like the rose and the violet." Sister Saint Francis remained until her death in the convent where she began her religious life, while Sister Sacred Heart was called to Lyons to govern the Institute.

If Mother Sacred Heart had been placed at the head of Micarême, it was not for her advantages of nature and blood; nor was it for that reason that Mother Saint John thought of her as her successor. She appreciated the use which the Superior of Micarême made of her gifts of nature and of grace. Aware of the moral and administrative value of Mother Sacred Heart, Mother Saint John said to the Sister who accompanied her, "At last, I have found her whom our dear congregation needs." The Sister placed no importance on these words. For her and for the entire congregation, Mother Saint John was to die Superior General; and, in spite of her age, she still had so much vigor and courage that they thought she would be their Mother for some time to come.

Archbishop de Pins was thinking of giving her a successor; and he, too, finding in the Superior of Micarême all the desired qualities for an excellent Superior General, commanded her to come to Lyons at the beginning of 1838. In the letter he wrote to her on this subject, in the name of His Lordship, Father Cholleton caused consternation to Mother Sacred Heart, to her community and to her family. In spite of her age, eighty years, Madame Tézenas hastened to Lyons with her daughter Madame Vialleton. She pleaded with the Archbishop to allow her dear daughter to stay near her. Notwithstanding her entreaties, Archbishop de Pins was firm in his resolution. Mother Sacred Heart was obliged to separate from the community that she had governed for fourteen years, and which she left in desolation.

The arrival of the Superior of Micarême at the motherhouse at the time of the elections, which took place in May, caused general alarm. In the entire congregation Mother Sacred Heart seemed like an authority imposed by Archbishop de Pins. "It is the lady," some said when speaking of her, "her title of nobility has won this preference." The Sisters had selected Mother Saint John's secretary, Sister Antoinette, to be her successor.

Archbishop de Pins did exactly what Mother Saint John intended to do, when he called the Superior of Micarême to the motherhouse. Yet, there are different ways of doing the same thing. What we give of our free will, rejoices our hearts; but what is wrested from it, tears them. Did Mother Saint John feel this rending of her heart? Knowing her sensitive nature, we cannot doubt it. In any case, she said nothing and Mother Sacred Heart found assistance from her when she was confronted with the prejudice and discontent of the community. Sensing her sorrow, the noble octogenarian consoled, encouraged and overwhelmed her with care, kindness and tenderness, and tried at the same time to bring peace to the troubled souls. Seeing that she was not successful, she suddenly took a great resolution. She decided to go away.

The next morning before the community had arisen, she left the motherhouse and took the stagecoach for Paris. From her own point of view, the plan was very simple. At the first relay, she would write to Father Cholleton to acquaint him with her desire to be forgotten at the time of the elections; to tell him where she expected to make her retreat, and to beg him to give his sanction. The Superior of the Visitation Monastery, in Paris, and Mother Saint John were very intimate. It was in this monastery, far from all cares and distractions, that she would take refuge in prayer and recollection.

If affairs were progressing suitably in her own mind, they were not so in the community. When she was seen neither at Mass nor at breakfast, the Sisters thought her ill. They ran to her room and searched the house. The portress was questioned but no one had seen Mother Saint John. Knowing the great virtue of their Mother and remembering the Curé of Ars' attempts at flight, the Sisters said among themselves that, in order to disappear more surely, their Mother, too, had been able to take flight after the manner of the saints.

Sister Delphine Caquet exclaimed: "If she has departed, we must bring her back." With the permission of the Assistant Superior she hastened in pursuit. Fortunately, railroads did not yet exist. Running to the diligence office, the Sister inquired if a Sister of Saint Joseph was listed among the passengers. The employee consulted the register. No religious name entered.

Sister Delphine consulted it herself and saw "Madame Fontbonne." The humble Mother wrote her family name to hide her flight.

Without a moment's delay, Sister Delphine asked for a carriage to go in pursuit of the stagecoach. The men objected because they thought it would be impossible to overtake the coach. The Sister insisted, entreated and finally persuaded the driver, assuring him that she would receive money from her father's banker to pay him. They departed, and for several hours the horses were strained to their utmost in maintaining an unusual speed. At last, exhausted, they could go no further, and all hope of reaching the desired goal seemed lost, when Sister Delphine, already overwrought with suspense, caught sight of the stagecoach at a turn in the road. They reached it at the next relay. One can imagine the surprise of the venerable fugitive when she saw Sister Delphine come into the coach. She exclaimed: "What, my dear child, you here? Who told you where I was? How did you come so far?"

"Mother," the daughter replied, "my heart guessed everything. I knew how to follow you. I have done so in the greatest anxiety. Now I have found you, I shall not leave you again, since it is the wish of your spiritual family that I remain with you."

When Sister Delphine told her what the Sisters had done to find her, tears of emotion flowed abundantly and she said: "I have only enough money to pay for my own journey, therefore, you must return to Lyons. I shall continue alone. Nothing will happen to me for God will watch over me."

"Do not be annoyed about the money," replied Sister Delphine, "the coach will stop at Roanne. I can borrow five hundred francs from my father's banker." M. Caquet, informed of this by his daughter's letter, answered: "I am very happy to have had the occasion to oblige Mother Saint John. Had I known of her passage through Roanne, I would have hastened to greet her and offer her my services."

Mother Saint John was not insensible to such kindness. She said to Sister Delphine: "Dear child, you are the guardian angel of your old Mother. May God recompense and bless your filial devotion."

In spite of her persistent vigor, the valiant octogenarian, who was eager to finish this long, painful journey alone, greatly needed this guardian angel. Sister Delphine rendered her many services. Mother Saint John arrived, full of courage, at the Visitation Monastery. The nuns received her as a friend, and she asked to make her retreat at once.

It is not for us to say with what fervor she made this retreat. The virtuous Mother spent the entire day in the chapel, thinking neither of going out nor of eating. Even the bell, which always caused her to rise at its first sound, was no longer a warning for her. It was not Saint Joseph's bell. The bell in Paris chimed in vain; the good Mother absorbed in prayer did not hear it. Several times it was necessary to tell her that she was late, that the Sisters waited meals for her. This want of exactness and politeness humiliated her deeply, and she asked pardon, at the same time begging Sister Delphine to tell her when it was time to go to the refectory. She could thus pray in peace and prolong her colloquies with God, undisturbed.

In the meantime, the retreat at Lyons had been closed and the general elections held. Although absent, Mother Saint John was reëlected unanimously. The Archbishop appointed Mother Sacred Heart as assistant. Father Cholleton notified Mother Saint John of the result of the election, and commanded her to return to her post "where her spiritual family was eager to see her again."

This news caused the venerable Mother sadness, but she obeyed simply, as she had ever done. Her return to the motherhouse was a feast and a triumph. Joy was universal and indescribable. They rang all the bells and hastened to the chapel to chant the *Te Deum*. Each one wanted to see her, to speak to her and to embrace her. The Sisters thanked Sister Delphine for bringing back their Mother, whom they reproached many times, for having left them.

"Ah, well!" she said with her usual simplicity, "it was better that I should disappear. If I were there in a corner of the chapel, some might have said: 'We must nominate that good old woman, we must not give her up.' By withdrawing myself, I frustrated any appeal to sentiment."

It was marvelous to see the Superior General and her assistant working together for the good of the Institute. These souls had no resemblances, but they understood and complemented each other as if one had been made for the other. The assistant, happy to be in daily contact with one who had confessed Jesus Christ and restored the congregation, surrounded her with affection, deference and respect and did nothing without consulting her. The Superior General, no less happy to be near her into whose hands she would soon resign her charge, initiated her into everything that concerned the Institute, made her acquainted with its works, the needs of each house, and lightened, beforehand, by her counsels and experience, the task of the one who would soon take her place. The community, witnessing this reciprocal esteem of the two Mothers, forgot their prejudices. Seeing Mother Sacred Heart so humble, so thoughtful for her Superior and so kind to everybody, the Sisters were drawn toward her. The motherhouse now enjoyed peace.

Suddenly, without any warning, Archbishop de Pins commanded Mother Saint John to resign. Although he had bent to the expressed will of the Sisters the preceding year, he had not renounced his plan. Since peace was restored, he thought the time favorable to the accomplishment of his design. The humble Mother asked nothing better than to resign her charge; but the manner of the command was hard, too hard for her delicate vibrant soul not to feel the shock terribly. However, the virtuous Mother offered to God her holocaust of love, which together with her silence during this trial is to be admired more than ecstasies. Without a complaint and without the least delay, simply, as usual, with humility,—we may even say with happiness—Mother Saint John resigned, and asked permission to go to Ars to make a retreat while the community held the election, which, necessitated by circumstances, was to choose her successor. The permission was granted.

There was a new disturbance at the motherhouse, this one more terrible than the first. The most influential Sisters had to be sent away. Sister Delphine was sent to the community of Renaison, near Roanne. She remained there until her death; first, as subject and later, as Superior. Sister Antoinette left the congregation and entered that of the Sacred Heart. Other Sisters were transferred to different convents. In spite of this severe treatment, they remained faithful to their holy vocation.

The elections took place. Mother Sacred Heart was chosen Superior General and Mother Saint John hastily left her retreat at Ars. The Sisters were very joyful at seeing her again. As soon as she arrived, she prostrated herself at the feet of the new Superior and promised obedience and complete submission.

CHAPTER II

THE STILLNESS OF A GREAT PEACE

AS A special favor, Mother Saint John asked the new Superior General to let her occupy the little room at the end of the court. She said: "This solitude will help me to be more recollected. I shall have more freedom to speak with God and the Sisters will be freer in their relations with you."

Mother Sacred Heart begged the humble Mother to make no changes in her accustomed habits, but she was forced to yield to the entreaties of the pleader, whom a refusal would have saddened. Mother Saint John retired to the retreat she had coveted. From that day, in the refectory, in the chapel, everywhere, she always chose the last place and asked all permissions on her knees. When Mother Sacred Heart wanted to stop her, she used to say: "Let me do this, Mother; I am so happy to obey."

The admirable struggle of humility and charity between these two Mothers recalls the most "edifying and touching records in the lives of the saints. Mother Saint John, so pure, peaceful and majestic, was, as it were, a planet tending towards its decline. Mother Sacred Heart was a bright and beautiful morning star, called by God to succeed her Sister, after shining for a time in union with her. It is a reflection of the unity and harmony of Heaven. Around the two stars one could see little clouds, that never succeeded in obscuring their light, which penetrated them, on the contrary, with its soft glimmering and finally drove them away." [1]

Mother Sacred Heart sent to Micarême for another Sister Antoinette, a Religious of great value, devotion and virtue, to replace as secretary her namesake, who had entered the community of the Mesdames of the Sacred Heart. The entire convent resumed its customary regularity. The wise conduct of the two Mothers established the reign of peace and holy joy, and the evening repose began for the noble octogenarian.

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[1] M. Rivaux: *Vie de la R. M. du Sacré-Coeur,* p. 177.

Mother Sacred Heart sent Mother Saint John to Aix for the water cure that was judged necessary. She went in June, 1839, with five other Sisters whose health needed attention. A few days later, the Superior of Gap, Mother Saint Joseph Chanay and Sister of the Conception, joined them. The meeting was a feast for everybody, as Gap and Lyons formed but one closely united family.

The Sisters had to use diplomacy to lead Mother Saint John to speak of the early days of the community. The upright soul of the virtuous Mother had no suspicion of the ruses of her friends. She let her heart speak, while revealing the virtues of her first daughters. Sister of the Conception enjoyed these conferences so much that she recorded some of them in her life of Mother Saint Joseph.

Why, then, have not the Sisters in Lyons kept all the conferences of this holy soul? Doubtless, they were not what, nowadays, would be termed "eloquent," yet they were of a sublimely supernatural nature. But, is not real eloquence that which touches the soul, and gives one the desire and the will to do more and more good? Mother Saint John possessed this kind of eloquence in the highest degree. What a heritage she would have left to the congregation, if all these good thoughts had been collected. The Sisters of Bordeaux have kept some of them.

In a letter dated December 24, 1925, from the Superior General of Bordeaux, Mother Mary of Jesus, to Mother Mary Flavia, Superior General of Lyons, reference is made to the steps being taken by her community for the beatification of Mother Saint Joseph Chanay. She seems to think that the cause of Mother Saint John has already been introduced in Rome. While there is no doubt about the eminent sanctity of the venerable Foundress, the Motherhouse of Lyons has done nothing for the cause of Mother Saint John. The part of the letter which we quote reads as follows:

"The Postulator and the Vice Postulator have been appointed; the tribunal is organized; the process will begin towards the middle of January, 1926. All the active members display a zeal with which we are quite moved, and there is established, around the dear cause, a current of sympathy for which we dared not hope. Here then, mounting toward the heights, are the two Mothers, the two most beautiful souls, perhaps, which our dear Institute has produced; the two most remarkable, at least, from the point of view of the great works which the Lord has deigned to confide to their heroic devotion.

"In one circumstance the delicate consideration of Divine Providence brought them together. It was at Aix, in 1839. The elder, who had suffered persecution and worn chains for the name of Jesus Christ, recognized herself in this young Mother destined to increase her spiritual posterity. Our annals have preserved this fact, and, for your joy and consolation, I am happy to communicate to you its narration. We owe it to Mother of the Immaculate Conception, companion and confidante of our revered Foundress and our second Superior General.

"Reverend Mother Saint John edified us all by her exact observance of our Holy Rule, her fidelity in asking the least permission and her fear of failing in her vows, particularly that of poverty. It was during these happy days that our Mother took from Mother Saint John's guimpe the pattern worn by the venerable old Sisters and quite different, in width, from that which the Sisters wear in the greater number of dioceses. Our Mother resolved to watch with greater care still, if that were possible, to safeguard the integrity of the habit as much for form as for the quality of the material used in making it. The whole she called 'relics of the congregation.'

"Mother Saint John was then almost eighty, but her sweet cheerfulness had not left her. We gave her the title *Reverend Mother* which she well deserved, but she said to us laughingly, 'Oh, my Sisters, leave out these reverends, I have been reverended enough.' Yet, in spite of her entreaties, that we call her 'Sister' she had to submit and allow herself to be called, 'Mother.'

"Every day at 'Benedicite' there was a struggle of humility between the two Mothers. Each one generally said half of the grace at meals. Our Mother always found means for letting Mother Saint John speak at the conferences by asking her about the older Sisters;

then she talked willingly. 'Alas, we are but the shadow of our predecessors. If you only knew how mortified they were. Their life was a continual violence.' This venerable Mother told us the efforts that each Sister took to mould her character, to change her disposition, to subdue her passions and to substitute humility for natural inclinations, going so far as to despise self and love abjection. They had the spirit of faith which sees God in the person of Superiors, in the Sisters, in the poor, in the sick and in little children.

"Besides these virtues, the Sisters used different instruments of penance to punish their bodies: hairshirts, disciplines, chains, and bracelets. She related that one day she told the Sisters to bring her their instruments of penance. Everybody obeyed and placed what they called their jewels in their Mother's apron, which could not contain all. 'In order not to make the Sisters vain, I tried to make them understand that this kind of penance is worth little and I showed them the excellence of that which is known to God alone. These good Sisters understood this language very well, for they used to accuse themselves, as if it were an unpardonable laxity, for having failed to perform during the day an entire rosary of mortifications.'

"They had a deep respect for one another and treated one another like queens, without causing simplicity and cheerfulness to suffer from it. This respect put the Sisters under the obligation of avoiding, with extreme care, whatever would have wounded charity and union, and even the most exacting politeness. Each one undertook the most painful and most repugnant employments, leaving the easier and more agreeable tasks for the other Sisters. The smallest faults were acknowledged with tears. They always asked penances for faults that at present might be considered virtues. 'Ah! my Sisters, I do not know how we shall be able to bear the comparison before God's judgment.'

"Formerly, a Sister was never happier than when she was told her faults. The first Sisters were so virtuous that, instead of complaining of a Superior or a Sister who had a difficult disposition, they loved this Superior and this Sister who gave them the occasion of practicing virtue. Our senior Sisters would have feared to lessen the number of their mortifications, which they called the diamonds of their crown. At present, it is necessary to take precautions to reprove shortcomings; in fact, subjects sometimes try to admonish the Superior. A Sister, who used the smallest object without permission, who carelessly misplaced things or who lost something, never excused herself. The Sisters now consider anything even the most trifling, as belonging to them. We have quite a number of objects for our use. There is indeed written in the books—'Obedience permits the use of this book to Sister So and So,' but if some one should take it from that Sister, who is not poor since she wants for nothing, I doubt not that she would cry out 'Stop thief!' No one should be able to steal anything from a Sister of Saint Joseph, since she owns nothing. 'We should remember that whatever we receive as food and clothing, is given to us through charity. Other people may make provisions for future needs, but we must live from day to day.'

"This venerable Mother unceasingly gave us examples of fidelity to the least observance. She worked always as her strength permitted and accepted, without saying anything, what was given for her use. One Saturday the Sister gave her, accidentally, a coiffe which had one string. Mother Saint John made a sign to the Sister to give her one having two strings. At the conference she accused herself on her knees of what she considered a fault, deploring the fact that she had so little religious spirit in spite of her great age. Our Mother said to her: 'You did well, Mother. You could not wear this coiffe with one string.' 'If I thought myself poor, I would have been happy that they gave it to me,' she said. 'I should have put it on as it was and later put the string on it.' Our eyes filled with tears at the sight of this venerable Sister reproaching herself for this act.

"The other conversations were not less interesting to us. She spoke to us of the graces that God showers on those model Religious who are generous in His service. They had great ease in uniting together in prayer, and it was not rare to see them bathed in tears when they spoke to God. They had a special gift for touching hearts and, above all, their work with the children in their classes, and with the sick in the hospitals bore much fruit. 'There is no reason for astonishment,' she used to say, 'God is always the same. His arm is never shortened. He never lets Himself be outdone in generosity. We have changed. We do not act as our predecessors. We would like to live comfortably and receive the same graces as they did. But, instead of submitting to God's Will, we expect God to submit to ours. This is not possible. My Sisters, let us walk in the steps of our predecessors. Let us be faithful; and we shall see how prodigal our Spouse will be in this life and especially how magnificent will be our reward in the next.' "[2]

These pages sent from Bordeaux are an authentic document showing the simple and solid virtue of her whose life we are trying to portray. It pleased Mother Mary of the Immaculate Conception to relate this event in the life of her holy Mother. The venerable foundress of Belley and Bourg, then of Gap and Bordeaux, never tired contemplating, studying and imitating the great restorer of the Institute, and we have already seen that she copied her religious habit in the smallest detail.

When the season for taking the cure was ended, Mother Saint John returned to Lyons. Retired in solitude in her little cell, she prayed and she worked, for she was industrious. Like the ancient solitaries, she went each day for her supply of water, and everybody saw her cross the court with her earthenware jug on her arm. In vain, the young novices offered to help her; the venerable octogenarian wished to serve herself. One day, she received a very sad letter from America. The Sisters there felt the consequences of events. Mother Saint John, who saw beyond these events, answered: "I was never more content nor more cheerful than since I have had the happiness of being relieved from the burden of superiorship. Every day I thank God for giving me time to think solely of my salvation. What saddens me is that I do not profit enough by it."

Mother Saint John granted to nature only what was strictly necessary. She spoke little, prayed very much, worked unceasingly and suffered without complaint. We cannot say exactly what took place between her and God. "The interior life," says Bossuet, "is a particular affair of God with man, and man with God. It is something mysterious between them." The happy influence exercised over the congregation by this recluse, always united to God, was not a mystery for anybody. She had ceased taking an active part in the government of the congregation; but she did not cease being useful to it nor being loved by it.

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[2] *Extrait de la vie manuscrite de la R. M. Saint Joseph,* par Mère Marie de l'Immaculée Conception.

The year 1839 was marked by other memorable events for the congregation. His Eminence, Cardinal Fesch, father and benefactor of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, died in Rome. Archbishop de Pins was relieved from his duties as administrator of the diocese and Bishop de Bonald was transferred from the Bishopric of Le Puy to the Archbishopric of Lyons. At the same time, Father Cholleton resigned his position as Vicar General and Superior of the congregation to enter the Society of Marist Fathers, lately founded by Father P. Colin. He was replaced in this double charge by Father Grange, Superior of the Chartreux. On this occasion, Mother Saint John opened her heart about her sorrow to her daughters in America and exhorted them to have absolute confidence in God in their trials. "That has been," she said, "all my resource in the troubles, miseries and tribulations of my long life. God can do all things. Without Him, we can do nothing. We must cast ourselves like little children into His arms."

Shortly after his installation, Archbishop de Bonald visited the motherhouse and saw her whom he already knew in the retreat of her own choice. He did not approve of this obscurity which, though inspired by humility, might produce an unfavorable impression. Mother Saint John had to leave this room and take one more suitable to her dignity in the convent. The Sisters keep, in the treasury of the motherhouse, a magnificent cross of massive gold in which precious relics are encased. We do not know whether this cross was given to Mother Saint John by Archbishop de Bonald at this visit or under other circumstances.

Some rather troubled letters arrived again from America. Mother Saint John answered in 1842: "Do not be uneasy. Thank God, I am enjoying all my faculties as well now as if I were but fifty, although I am eighty-three. I rise with the community; I assist at all the exercises; I write, read, sew and knit without using spectacles. Help me to bless God for the time and strength He is giving me to prepare for eternity."

Bishop Rosati had to return to France on account of his health. On January 5, 1842, she wrote: "For three or four months, I have hoped that Bishop Rosati of Saint Louis would come to Lyons. I have waited for him until now, but, since he has not arrived, I can wait no longer. I have a great desire to write to you."

One day during the winter of 1843, Mother Saint John fell on the ice in the yard. As she was unable to rise, her daughters ran to her assistance and carried her to her room. After examination, it was found that besides several bruises, she had dislocated her shoulder. The doctor considered an operation necessary. He added that it would be long, hard and painful and asked to be assisted by another doctor. The operation was performed. Doctor Bonnet, chief doctor of the Hôtel-Dieu, and Doctor Berlioz performed this painful task. She, with eyes fixed on the crucifix, offered no complaint, nor uttered a single moan. "It is very good to deal with saintly people," said Doctor Bonnet, "one can operate as he wishes. This good Mother in the midst of great suffering has just given her daughters an example of heroic patience and sublime resignation."

The operation over, Mother Sacred Heart continued her care for the patient in the most delicate manner. She and her community persevered in prayer to obtain the recovery of the dear one. God was not deaf to these supplications. Mother Saint John recovered more quickly than they had expected and one could see the venerable convalescent walking again through the corridors of the house, though now she had to use a cane to make her step more steady. At length, laden with years and merits, the Mother bent like the sheaf of wheat that is ripe for the harvest. Sadly realizing that the end was more and more imminent, Mother Sacred Heart sent a letter to all the convents.

"I regret to tell you that the health of Reverend Mother causes us great uneasiness." Later she wrote: "Since our last letter, the state of Mother Saint John alarms us, although she is somewhat better. Let us continue to ask of Our Lord the prolongation of a life which is so dear to us."

This improvement did not last long. Mother Sacred Heart had to write soon:

> "The health of our venerated Mother Saint John has been failing for some days. This causes us grave fears, since her great age renders her unable to fight against the sickness. We must hope in God. Let us redouble our prayers for her preservation. You know how justly she is entitled to our filial love. She has been, so to speak, the maker of our congregation. Her long administration has been remarkable for the wisdom of her acts, her counsels and the fruitfulness of her works. There is scarcely one among us, whom she has not received to her holy vows. Her goodness, her great perfection and her admirable regularity have made her, and still make her, at the age of eighty-four, a model for all. Should not these memories excite in us an ardent desire for the restoration of her health? With what fervor ought we not unite in prayer to God that He leave to us for our imitation, our gratitude, and our love, one so full of experience, virtues and merits?"

This letter, dated March 11, 1843, evoked in the congregation a redoubling of prayers. God showed that He heard them, by prolonging the life of the dear invalid for several months. The time was drawing near when Mother Saint John was to depart to see Him for Whom she had suffered. She languished for several months. Her daughters flocked around her. Each one wished to lavish cares on her, and to receive her counsels, because they felt that they were the last. Mother Sacred Heart spent herself and spared nothing to prolong those precious days.

The dear patient was more than ever admirable. No complaint and no moan came from her lips; and the peace of her soul radiated her countenance. With perfect calmness, she spoke of her death. "Have I much longer to live?" she asked a few moments before her death. "Your chains will soon be broken," was the answer. At these words, a celestial smile shone on her face. Calmly and peacefully she waited, wishing only to do the will of God. She did not wait long. With an almost imperceptible sigh, she left the earth and went to be admitted to the nuptials of her Spouse. Mother Sacred Heart wrote:

> "Our Reverend Mother Saint John is no more. After sixty-three and a half years of religious profession, God called her to Himself, on the morning of November 22, 1843, aged eighty-four years and eight months. Her last moments were as beautiful as her life had been. Patience and her usual sweetness accompanied her to the end. She died the death of the just, full of years and merits. Her obsequies took place on the twenty-third, with a religious pomp, worthy of her who was its object. All the Sisters, who were able, came to take part in the ceremonies. It was very consoling to see them, in the name of the whole congregation, pay a last tribute of regret and love to her whom we had so long venerated as a most perfect Religious, the wisest and most prudent of Superiors and the most tender of mothers. We are happy to express our gratitude to them.
>
> "Let us remember in our prayers the soul of our beloved Mother and may the ardor of our supplications in her behalf correspond to the benefits we have received from her, and to the rich heritage of religious traditions she has bequeathed to us."

Mother Saint John is no more. To her daughters of the two worlds, who venerate her, what remains today? There remains her portrait which they are happy to contemplate. There remains her memory which brings them back to the source of their Institute and renews their fervor. The last years of Mother Saint John, with all their sufferings and humiliations, are a fitting close to a life which, from earliest childhood, was spent solely in the service of God. Without those years, which were the real test of her virtue, Mother Saint John's example to the world would have lost much of its lustre, while her soul would have been deprived of great merit before God. Without those years,—the crowning proof of her pure, unselfish love of her Spouse,—the blessings obtained by their holy Foundress would not have enriched, during all these years, her Religious family throughout the world.

If Mother Saint John had realized her little plan of retreat as she had designed it, she would have ended her days humbly and quietly; but that could not be after a life like hers. To the long and well-filled life which the noble octogenarian had just finished, to this life whose dawn had been so supernaturally radiant, its noon so fruitful, there was needed, towards its evening, a splendid sunset. God offered it. The saintly Mother stretched out both hands.

And then she, who had known, at different times, the only truly great suffering of the perfect Religious, was to taste it again before dying. "God permitted," Canon Rivaux tells us, "that the long and saintly career of Mother Saint John be crowned with the Cross which it pleases Him to send at the end of the lives of his greatest and dearest servants—the cross coming from Superiors.

"It is their Golgotha, when, having said, like the Saviour: 'Father, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' the work of their salvation is consummated by this abandonment which gives them the last seal of resemblance to the Divine Model." [3] Suffering coming from Superiors is the most painful of martyrdoms. The good Religious, who has not known it, does not know what suffering is.

Mother Saint John knew this suffering and, as usual, showed herself admirable. Not a complaint, not a word. She humbled herself and remained silent. She acted in a saintly manner. How simply Mother Saint John always practised heroism. This simplicity of virtue has more weight than ecstasies and miracles. God performs miracles. The soul under the weight of trial practises virtue, and the soul knows what virtue costs. Mother Saint John was the victim. She had the right to immolate herself. Her daughters thought she had the right, but not the obligation. They protested against such severity; they demanded consideration for her who had confessed the Faith and who had used her life in the service of the community. Dare we, who see things at a distance and consequently in a different light, be severe towards those who thus protested?

Their conduct was very beautiful. There are so few who have enough heart, enough courage and enough forgetfulness of self to dare, at the risk of compromising themselves, to raise their voices in condemnation of the wrong done to others. These Sisters loved their Mother; they revered her, they knew her to be worthy of all their respect, and they wanted to keep her as their head until her death; this their actions proved. The heart which knows how to love can but understand, admire and grow tender before this rare devotion.

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[3] M. Rivaux: *Vie de la R. M. Saint-Jean,* p. 367.

One wonders how it was possible for Archbishop de Pins to show so little consideration for a Foundress whose previous conduct made her so respected. He was a virtuous prelate; he liked the Sisters of Saint Joseph; he wished them in his diocese and he appreciated the work of their Superior. Canon Rivaux tells us that, according to certain documents, His Lordship must have been prejudiced against the venerable Mother. That explains this trial and all preceding ones. Someone had worked in the dark. It is sad to say so; but, in the presence of the great, there is always somebody ready to assume this repugnant work. God grant that we be not of that number.

We read in Canon Rivaux that Mother Saint John had received from the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII, a brief in which she was appointed Superior General of the Congregation of Saint Joseph for life; but her modesty kept it constantly hidden. It was found when she changed her room. However great a distinction is this brief, in our opinion it does less honor to Mother Saint John than the beautiful, dignified and simple manner with which she bore her trial. "A great suffering is a great majesty." God wished to add this to all the other dignities of His Chosen One.

CHAPTER III

A MOTHER'S INTERCESSION

HAVE miracles been performed through the intercession of Mother Saint John? Many people maintain so in the past, and, in the present, several relate some truly remarkable cases of her influence. However, of all those who have said and still say that special favors were conferred on them through her, no one has taken the trouble to have these facts confirmed by the proper authorities. We shall say nothing of the wonderful gifts that have been attributed to this saintly Religious. Nevertheless, we shall reproduce certain interventions reported by Canon Rivaux in his biography of Mother Saint John.

"Her power was many times manifested during life and after death. In 1838, a postulant was attacked by a fever so violent, that four people could scarcely hold her. She was brought to the gates of the tomb, without being able to receive the Last Sacraments. Mother Saint John approached her bed and said to her: 'In the name of God, my child, calm yourself.' At the same time, she took some holy water and made the sign of the cross on the closed eyelids of the patient. At that moment the fever ceased. The postulant regained her reason and remained conscious for more than an hour during which time she received the Last Sacraments in a holy manner. Everybody attributed this favor to the prayers of Mother Saint John.

"During a very rigorous winter, the supply of coal was exhausted, and the poor Mother had no resources to renew it. She inspired her daughters with the spirit of prayer and confidence in God. Full of this spirit, Sister Saint Ursula, who had charge of attending the fires, used, day after day, as she took what seemed to be almost the last shovelful of coal, to fall on her knees before the little remnant and implore of God to have pity on the distress of her poor saintly Mother and to come to her aid. Every day there was the same fear and the repetition of the same prayer. This prayer was answered. Divine Providence made this supply of coal last, day by day, until the end of that long and severe winter. The entire community attributed the prodigy to the great faith of Mother Saint John and to the Sister, formed in her school.

"After the death of this venerable Mother, a young Sister, while occupied through obedience in writing some details of her life, learned suddenly that a saintly Religious, her uncle, who had been a second father, was afflicted with a frightful disease and was in danger of death. 'Good Mother Saint John,' she cried with faith and simplicity, 'I am working for you. If you are in Heaven, obtain from God the recovery of my dear uncle.' Almost instantly a letter informed her that the dear patient was better, and another one brought news of his complete recovery in spite of his old age, his worn-out life and the fury of the great disease. Glory and thanks are due to God, and to her also, who interceded so efficaciously for her dear daughter.

"Another Religious, who felt toward her Superior an extreme antipathy which she could not overcome, felt inspired after a long and useless struggle, to have recourse to Mother Saint John and to go and pray at her tomb. 'My Mother,' she said with simplicity, 'you, who were so good, you, who loved us so well and who bore with such sweet and maternal patience so many different characters and dispositions, you see my difficulty. I am suffering and I make others suffer. Help me to overcome this trial. I have confidence in you, for I know that you are in Heaven and powerful with God.' As soon as her prayer was finished she felt herself suddenly changed and encouraged. A sweet peace filled her troubled soul. Her dislike and prejudices disappeared completely and gave place to the sweetest confidence and charity.

"Two Sisters of Saint Joseph, who were filled with veneration for Mother Saint John, went on a visit to Lyons and were anxious to pray at her tomb. For want of exact information, they were unable to find it in the midst of the immense and confusing necropolis of Loyasse. Wearied and disheartened after hours of useless search, they fell on their knees and besought their Mother with tears to show them the place of her repose. 'My Sisters, I am here,' distinctly answered a sweet voice, which they recognized. They were, without knowing it, near the grave which they sought. We can imagine their joy and their prayers, mingled with tears of gratitude and filial piety. Their souls were inundated with grace at the venerated tomb, whence their saintly Mother had deigned to answer them.

"Three months after the death of Mother Saint John, when one of her daughters, who was quite devoted to her, offered to the Curé of Ars an honorarium for Masses for the repose of her soul, the holy priest refused, saying: 'Your Reverend Mother does not need them. She is high in glory. I know it.'"

When the humble Mother Saint John gave an account of her stewardship, she could show to her Judge more than three thousand Religious and two hundred forty-four convents of Saint Joseph founded or restored to unity from 1807 to 1838. It is almost unbelievable.

Count, if you can, the poor, the sick, the blind, whom she helped, while living, by her charity and that of her daughters. Count the sufferings she has eased, the courage she has sustained, the souls she has given to the Church—souls of all races, of all classes, of all colors.

Since she is in her heavenly rest—a rest from all activity—what has she not done through her daughters? There are Sisters of Saint Joseph in all parts of the world. Everywhere, Mother Saint John assists them in their work which is only the continuation of her work.

Even in our own day, the members of this congregation, still cherishing the spirit of their holy Foundress, and drawing from the sources of humility, charity and simplicity, find no place too distant and no race too savage for their kindly ministrations and for the furthering of the Kingdom of that Lord Who has said: "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me."[1]

We hope, with the grace of God, that the good attained since the origin of the congregation will be continued for the sanctification of its members, the salvation of souls and the glory of Holy Mother Church.

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[1] Saint Matthew, XXV, 40.

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